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Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy

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Summary

The United States, partner countries, and the Afghan government are attempting to reverse recent gains made by the resilient Taliban-led insurgency since the December 2014 transition to a smaller international mission consisting primarily of training and advising the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). The Afghan government has come under increasing domestic criticism not only for the security situation but for its internal divisions. In September 2014, the United States brokered a compromise to address a dispute over the 2014 presidential election, but a September 2016 deadline approaches for resolving remaining issues such as election reform and whether the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) position created under the compromise might become a prime ministership in a restructured government.

The number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, which peaked at about 100,000 in June 2011, stands at about 9,800, of which most are assigned to the 13,000-person NATO-led "Resolute Support Mission" that trains, assists, and advises the ANDSF. About 2,000 of the U.S. contingent are involved in combat against Al Qaeda and associated terrorist groups, including the Afghanistan branch of the Islamic State organization (ISIL-Khorasan), under "Operation Freedom's Sentinel." Amid assessments that the ANDSF is having difficulty preventing insurgent gains—exemplified by the Taliban capture of the city of Konduz in late September 2015 and its major gains in Helmand Province—President Obama announced on October 15, 2015, that the U.S. force there would remain at its current size through almost all of 2016, and fall to 5,500 by the end of the year. That is a significantly larger than the force of about 1,000 personnel that was announced previously, and, there is reported consideration within the Administration to further postpone or even cancel the reduction to 5,500.

U.S. officials assert that, despite the apparent deterioration of the security situation, insurgents do not pose a threat to the stability of the government. In late May 2016, the vulnerabilities of the Taliban were exposed when the United States tracked and killed with an unmanned aerial vehicle strike the head of the Taliban, Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour. However, the strike and Mansour's replacement might, at least temporarily, set back renewed efforts by the Afghan government to try to achieve a negotiated settlement with the Taliban. President Ashraf Ghani had some early success in producing negotiations between government officials and Taliban representatives, but talks broke off in mid-2015. Efforts to restart the talks by the United States, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China failed, possibly because Taliban victories strengthened those arguing against talks. Afghanistan's minorities and women's groups assert concerns that a settlement might erode post-2001 human rights gains.

A component of U.S. policy to help establish a self-sustaining Afghanistan is to encourage economic development and integration into regional trading patterns. However, Afghanistan will remain dependent on foreign aid for many years. Through the end of FY2014, the United States provided about $100 billion to Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban, of which about 60% has been to equip and train the ANDSF. About $5.7 billion was being provided in FY2015, including $4.1 billion for the ANDSF. For FY2016, the United States is providing $5.3 billion, including $3.8 billion for the ANDSF. The Administration has requested about $4.67 billion for FY2017, of which $3.5 billion is for the ANDSF. These figures do not include funds for U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. See CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman.

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Background

Afghanistan has a history of a high degree of decentralization, and resistance to foreign invasion and occupation. Some have termed it the "graveyard of empires."

From Early History to the 19th Century

Alexander the Great conquered what is now Afghanistan in three years (330 B.C.E. to 327 B.C.E.), although at significant cost and with significant difficulty, and requiring, among other steps, marriage to a resident of the conquered territory. For example, he was unable to fully pacify Bactria, an ancient region spanning what is now northern Afghanistan and parts of the neighboring Central Asian states. (A collection of valuable Bactrian gold was hidden from the Taliban when it was in power and emerged from the Taliban period unscathed.) From the third to the eighth century, A.D., Buddhism was the dominant religion in Afghanistan. At the end of the seventh century, Islam spread in Afghanistan when Arab invaders from the Umayyad Dynasty defeated the Persian empire of the Sassanians. In the 10th century, Muslim rulers called Samanids, from Bukhara (in what is now Uzbekistan), extended their influence into Afghanistan, and the complete conversion of Afghanistan to Islam occurred during the rule of the Gaznavids in the 11th century. They ruled over a vast empire based in what is now Ghazni province of Afghanistan.

In 1504, Babur, a descendant of the conquerors Tamarlane and Genghis Khan, took control of Kabul and then moved on to India, establishing the Mughal Empire. (Babur is buried in the Babur Gardens complex in Kabul, which has been refurbished with the help of the Agha Khan Foundation.) Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, Afghanistan was fought over by the Mughal Empire and the Safavid Dynasty of Persia (now Iran), with the Safavids mostly controlling Herat and western Afghanistan, and the Mughals controlling Kabul and the east. A monarchy ruled by ethnic Pashtuns was founded in 1747 by Ahmad Shah Durrani. He was a senior officer in the army of Nadir Shah, ruler of Persia, when Nadir Shah was assassinated and Persian control over Afghanistan weakened.

A strong ruler, Dost Muhammad Khan, emerged in Kabul in 1826 and created concerns among Britain that the Afghans were threatening Britain's control of India; that fear led to a British decision in 1838 to intervene in Afghanistan, setting off the first Anglo-Afghan War (1838-1842). Nearly all of the 4,500-person British force was killed in that war. The second Anglo-Afghan War took place during 1878-1880.

Early 20th Century and Cold War Era

King Amanullah Khan (1919-1929) launched attacks on British forces in Afghanistan (Third Anglo-Afghan War) shortly after taking power and won complete independence from Britain as recognized in the Treaty of Rawalpindi (August 8, 1919). He was considered a secular modernizer presiding over a government in which all ethnic minorities participated. He was succeeded by King Mohammad Nadir Shah (1929-1933), and then by King Mohammad Zahir Shah. Zahir Shah's reign (1933-1973) is remembered fondly by many older Afghans for promulgating a constitution in 1964 that established a national legislature and promoting freedoms for women, including dropping a requirement that they cover their face and hair. In part, the countryside was secured during the King's time by local tribal militias called a*rbokai*. However, Zahir Shah also built ties to the Soviet government by entering into a significant political and arms purchase relationship with the Soviet Union. The Soviets built large infrastructure projects in Afghanistan during Zahir Shah's time, such as the north-south Salang Pass/Tunnel and Bagram airfield.

This period was the height of the Cold War, and the United States sought to prevent Afghanistan from falling into the Soviet orbit. As Vice President, Richard Nixon visited Afghanistan in 1953, and President Dwight Eisenhower visited in 1959. President John F. Kennedy hosted King Zahir Shah in 1963. The United States tried to use aid to counter Soviet influence, providing agricultural and other development assistance. Among the major U.S.-funded projects were large USAID-led irrigation and hydroelectric dam efforts in Helmand Province, including Kajaki Dam (see below).

Afghanistan's slide into instability began in the 1970s, during the Nixon Administration, when the diametrically opposed Communist Party and Islamic movements grew in strength. While receiving medical treatment in Italy, Zahir Shah was overthrown by his cousin, Mohammad Daoud, a military leader who established a dictatorship with strong state involvement in the economy. Daoud was overthrown and killed[1] in April 1978, during the Carter Administration, by People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA, Communist party) military officers under the direction of two PDPA (Khalq, or "Masses" faction) leaders, Hafizullah Amin and Nur Mohammad Taraki, in what is called the *Saur* (April) Revolution. Taraki became president, but he was displaced in September 1979 in a coup led by Amin. Both leaders drew their strength from rural ethnic Pashtuns and tried to impose radical socialist change on a traditional society, in part by redistributing land and bringing more women into government. The attempt at rapid modernization sparked rebellion by Islamic parties opposed to such moves.

Soviet Invasion and Occupation Period

The Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, to prevent further gains by the Islamic militias, known as the *mujahedin* (Islamic fighters). Upon their invasion, the Soviets replaced Amin with another PDPA leader who the Soviets apparently perceived as pliable, Babrak Karmal, leader of the Parcham ("Banner") faction of the PDPA. Kamal had joined the 1978 PDPA takeover but was subsequently exiled by Taraki and Amin, who perceived him as a threat.

Soviet occupation forces numbered about 120,000. They were assisted by Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) military forces of about 25,000-40,000, supplemented by about 20,000 paramilitary and tribal militia forces, including the PDPA-dominated paramilitary organization called the *Sarandoy*. Soviet and Afghan forces were never able to pacify the outlying areas of the country, in part because DRA forces were plagued by desertions and their effectiveness was limited. The *mujahedin* benefited from U.S. weapons, provided through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in cooperation with Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence directorate (ISI).

The Seven Major "*Mujahedin*" Parties and Their Activities

The *mujahedin* were also relatively well organized and coordinated by seven major parties that in early 1989 formed what they claimed was a government-in-exile—a Peshawar-based "Afghan Interim Government" (AIG). The seven party leaders and their parties—sometimes referred to as the "Peshawar 7"—were Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi (Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan); Sibghatullah Mojaddedi (Afghan National Liberation Front); Gulbuddin Hikmatyar (Hezb-i-Islam—Gulbuddin, Islamic Party of Gulbuddin, HIG); Burhanuddin Rabbani (Jamiat-Islami/Islamic Society); Yunus Khalis (Hezb-i-Islam); Abd-i-Rab Rasul Sayyaf (*Ittihad Islami*/Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan); and Pir Gaylani (National Islamic Front

[1] Daoud's grave was discovered outside Kabul in early 2008. He was reburied in an official ceremony in Kabul in March 2009.

of Afghanistan, NIFA). Mohammadi and Khalis died of natural causes in 2002 and 2006, respectively, and Rabbani was killed in a September 2011, assassination. The others are still active in Afghan politics and governance or, in the case of Hikmatyar, insurgency.

The *mujahedin* weaponry included U.S.-supplied portable shoulder-fired anti-aircraft systems called "Stingers," which proved highly effective against Soviet aircraft. The United States decided in 1985 to provide these weapons to the *mujahedin* after substantial debate within the Reagan Administration and some in Congress over whether they could be used effectively and whether doing so would harm broader U.S.-Soviet relations. The *mujahedin* also stored weaponry in a large network of natural and manmade tunnels and caves throughout Afghanistan. However, some warned that a post-Soviet power structure in Afghanistan could be adverse to U.S. interests because much of the covert aid was being channeled to the Islamist groups.

Partly because of the effectiveness of the Stinger in shooting down Soviet helicopters and fixed wing aircraft, the Soviet Union's losses mounted—about 13,400 Soviet soldiers were killed in the war, according to Soviet figures—turning Soviet domestic opinion against the war. In 1986, after the reformist Mikhail Gorbachev became leader, the Soviets replaced Karmal with the director of Afghan intelligence, Najibullah Ahmedzai (known by his first name) - a Ghilzai Pashtun from the Parcham faction of the PDPA.

Geneva Accords (1988) and Soviet Withdrawal

On April 14, 1988, then-Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to a U.N.-brokered accord (the Geneva Accords) requiring the Soviet Union to withdraw. The withdrawal was completed by February 15, 1989, leaving in place the weak Najibullah government. A warming of relations moved the United States and Soviet Union to try for a political settlement to the Afghan conflict, a trend accelerated by the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, which reduced Moscow's capacity for supporting communist regimes abroad. On September 13, 1991, Moscow and Washington agreed to a joint cutoff of military aid to the Afghan combatants as of January 1, 1992, which was implemented by all accounts.

The State Department has said that a total of about $3 billion in economic and covert military assistance was provided by the United States to the Afghan *mujahedin* from 1980 until the end of the Soviet occupation in 1989. Press reports say the covert aid program grew from about $20 million per year in FY1980 to about $300 million per year during FY1986-FY1990.[2] The Soviet pullout was viewed as a decisive U.S. "victory." The Soviet pullout caused a reduction in subsequent covert funding and, as indicated in **Table 10**, U.S. assistance to Afghanistan remained at relatively low levels because support for a major U.S.-led effort to rebuild the economy of Afghanistan was lacking. The United States closed its embassy in Kabul in January 1989, as the Soviet Union was completing its pullout, and it remained so until the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

Despite the Soviet troop withdrawal in 1989, Najibullah still enjoyed Soviet financial and advisory support and he defied expectations that his government would collapse soon after a Soviet withdrawal. However, his position weakened subsequently after the Soviets cut off financial and advisory support as of January 1, 1992. On March 18, 1992, Najibullah publicly agreed to step down once an interim government was formed—an announcement set off rebellions by Uzbek and Tajik militia commanders in northern Afghanistan—particularly Abdul

[2] For FY1991, Congress reportedly cut covert aid appropriations to the *mujahedin* from $300 million the previous year to $250 million, with half the aid withheld until the second half of the fiscal year. See "Country Fact Sheet: Afghanistan," in *U.S. Department of State Dispatch,* vol. 5, no. 23 (June 6, 1994), p. 377.

Rashid Dostam—who joined prominent *mujahedin* commander Ahmad Shah Masoud of the Islamic Society, a largely Tajik party headed by Burhannudin Rabbani. Masoud had earned a reputation as a brilliant strategist by preventing the Soviets from conquering his power base in the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul. Najibullah fell, and the *mujahedin* regime began April 18, 1992.[3]

The *Mujahedin* Government and Rise of the Taliban

The fall of Najibullah exposed rifts among the *mujahedin* parties. The leader of one of the smaller parties (Afghan National Liberation Front), Islamic scholar Sibghatullah Mojadeddi, was president during April-May 1992. Under an agreement among the major parties, Rabbani became president in June 1992 with agreement that he would serve until December 1994. He refused to step down at that time, saying that political authority would disintegrate without a clear successor. That decision was strongly opposed by other *mujahedin* leaders, including Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a Pashtun, and leader of the Islamist conservative Hizb-e-Islam Gulbuddin *mujahedin* party. Hikmatyar and several allied factions fought unsuccessfully to dislodge Rabbani. Rabbani reached an agreement for Hikmatyar to serve as Prime Minister, but because of mutual mistrust, Hikmatyar never formally took office and fighting eventually destroyed much of west Kabul.

In 1993-1994, Afghan Islamic clerics and students, mostly of rural, Pashtun origin, formed the Taliban movement. Many were former *mujahedin* who had become disillusioned with conflict among *mujahedin* parties and had moved into Pakistan to study in Islamic seminaries ("madrassas") mainly of the "Deobandi" school of Islam.[4] Some say this interpretation of Islam is similar to the "Wahhabism" that is practiced in Saudi Arabia. Taliban practices were also consonant with conservative Pashtun tribal traditions. The Taliban's leader, Mullah Muhammad Umar, had been a fighter in Khalis's Hezb-i-Islam party during the anti-Soviet war—Khalis' party was generally considered moderate Islamist during the anti-Soviet war.

The Taliban viewed the Rabbani government as weak, corrupt, and anti-Pashtun, and the four years of civil war between the *mujahedin* groups (1992-1996) created popular support for the Taliban as able to deliver stability. With the help of defections, the Taliban took control of the southern city of Qandahar in November 1994. Umar reportedly entered the Qandahar shrine containing a purported cloak used by the Prophet Mohammad and donned it in front of hundreds of followers.[5] By February 1995, the movement's fighters were near Kabul. In September 1995, the Taliban captured Herat province, bordering Iran, and imprisoned its Tajik governor, Ismail Khan (ally of Rabbani and Masoud), who later escaped and took refuge in Iran. In September 1996, Taliban victories near Kabul led to the withdrawal of Rabbani and Masoud to the Panjshir Valley (north of Kabul); the Taliban took control of Kabul on September 27, 1996. Taliban gunmen entered the U.N. facility in Kabul that was sheltering Najibullah, his brother, and aides, and hanged them.

[3] After failing to flee, Najibullah, his brother, and aides remained at a U.N. facility in Kabul until the Taliban movement seized control in 1996 and hanged them.

[4] The Deobandi school began in 1867 in a seminary in Uttar Pradesh, in British-controlled India, that was set up to train Islamic clerics and to counter the British educational model.

[5] According to press reports in December 2012, the cloak remains in the shrine, which is guarded by a family of caretakers who, despite professions of political neutrality, have suffered several assassinations over the years.

Taliban Rule (September 1996-November 2001)

The Taliban regime was led by Mullah Muhammad Umar, who held the title of Head of State and "Commander of the Faithful." He remained in the Taliban power base in Qandahar and made no public speeches or appearances, although he did occasionally receive high-level foreign officials. In May 1996, shortly before the Taliban entered Kabul, Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden relocated from Sudan to Afghanistan, where he had been a recruiter of Arab fighters during the anti-Soviet war. He initially settled in territory in Nangarhar province (near Jalalabad city) controlled by Hezb-i-Islam of Yunus Khalis (Mullah Umar's party leader), but later had freer reign as the Taliban captured territory in Afghanistan. Umar reportedly forged a political and personal bond with Bin Laden and refused U.S. demands to extradite him. Like Umar, most of the senior figures in the Taliban regime were Ghilzai Pashtuns, which predominate in eastern Afghanistan. They are rivals of the Durrani Pashtuns, who are predominant in the south.

The Taliban lost international and domestic support as it imposed strict adherence to Islamic customs in areas it controlled and employed harsh punishments, including executions. The Taliban authorized its "Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Suppression of Vice" to use physical punishments to enforce strict Islamic practices, including bans on television, Western music, and dancing. It prohibited women from attending school or working outside the home, except in health care, and it publicly executed some women for adultery. In what many consider an extreme action, in March 2001 the Taliban blew up two large Buddha statues carved into hills above Bamiyan city, considering them idols.

U.S. Policy Toward the Taliban During Its Rule/Bin Laden Presence

The Clinton Administration opened talks with the Taliban after it captured Qandahar in 1994 and continued to engage the movement after it took power. However, the Administration was unable to moderate the Taliban's policies, and the United States withheld recognition of Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, formally recognizing no faction as the government. The United Nations continued to seat the Rabbani government. The State Department ordered the Afghan embassy in Washington, DC, closed in August 1997. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1193 (August 28, 1998) and 1214 (December 8, 1998) urged the Taliban to end discrimination against women. Women's rights groups urged the Clinton Administration not to recognize the Taliban government. In May 1999, the Senate-passed S.Res. 68 called on the President not to recognize an Afghan government that oppresses women.

The Taliban's hosting of Al Qaeda's leadership gradually became the Clinton Administration's overriding agenda item with the Taliban. In April 1998, then-U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson headed a small U.S. delegation to Afghanistan, but the group did not meet Mullah Umar or persuade the Taliban to hand over Bin Laden. After the August 7, 1998, Al Qaeda bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the Clinton Administration increased pressure on the Taliban to extradite him, imposing U.S. sanctions on Taliban-controlled Afghanistan and achieving adoption of some U.N. sanctions as well. On August 20, 1998, the United States fired cruise missiles at Al Qaeda training camps in eastern Afghanistan.[6] Some observers assert that the Administration missed several opportunities to strike bin Laden himself, including a purported sighting of him by an unarmed Predator drone at a location called Tarnak

[6] A pharmaceutical plant in Sudan (Al Shifa) believe to be producing chemical weapons for Al Qaeda also was struck that day, although U.S. reviews later corroborated Sudan's assertions that the plant was strictly civilian in nature.

Farm in Afghanistan in the fall of 2000.[7] Clinton Administration officials asserted that U.S. domestic and international support for ousting the Taliban militarily at that time was lacking.

The "Northern Alliance" Congeals

The Taliban's policies caused different Afghan factions to ally with the Tajik core of the anti-Taliban opposition—the ousted President Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Masoud, and their ally in the Herat area, Ismail Khan. Joining the Tajik factions in the broader "Northern Alliance" were Uzbek, Hazara Shiite, and even some Pashtun Islamist factions discussed below. Virtually all these figures remain key players in politics in Afghanistan.

- **Uzbeks/General Dostam.** One major faction of the Northern Alliance was the Uzbek militia (the *Junbush-Melli*, or National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan) of General Abdul Rashid Dostam. Frequently referred to by some Afghans as one of the "warlords" who gained power during the anti-Soviet war, Dostam first joined those seeking to oust Rabbani during his 1992-1996 presidency, but later joined him and the other Northern Alliance factions opposed to the Taliban.
- **Hazara Shiites.** Members of Hazara tribes, mostly Shiite Muslims, are prominent in Bamiyan, Dai Kundi, and Ghazni provinces of central Afghanistan, as well as Kabul city. The main Hazara Shiite militia in the Northern Alliance was Hizb-e-Wahdat (Unity Party, composed of eight groups). In 1995, the Taliban captured and killed Hizb-e-Wahdat's leader Abdul Ali Mazari. The most prominent current Hazara faction leader is Mohammad Mohaqeq.
- **Pashtun Islamists/Sayyaf.** Some Pashtuns joined the Northern Alliance. Among them was the conservative Islamist *mujahedin* faction *Ittihad Islami*) headed by Abd-i-Rab Rasul Sayyaf. Sayyaf reportedly viewed the Taliban as selling out Afghanistan to Al Qaeda.

Bush Administration Afghanistan Policy Before the September 11 Attacks

Prior to the September 11 attacks on the United States, Bush Administration policy continued the previous Administration's policy toward Afghanistan by continuing to apply economic and political pressure on the Taliban while retaining some dialogue with it, and refusing to militarily assist the Northern Alliance. The September 11 Commission report said that, prior to the September 11 attacks, Administration officials leaned toward providing such aid, as well as aiding anti-Taliban Pashtuns. Additional covert options were reportedly also under consideration.[8] In accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333, in February 2001 the State Department ordered the Taliban representative office in New York closed, although a Taliban representative continued to operate informally in the New York area.[9] In March 2001, Administration officials received a Taliban envoy to discuss bilateral issues, and the Administration stepped up engagement with Pakistan to try to reduce its support for the Taliban, amid widespread allegations that Pakistani advisers were helping the Taliban against the Northern Alliance.

Even though the Northern Alliance was supplied with Iranian, Russian, and Indian financial and military support, the Taliban continued to gain ground, even in areas not inhabited by Pashtuns.

[7] http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4540958.

[8] Drogin, Bob. "U.S. Had Plan for Covert Afghan Options Before 9/11." *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 2002.

[9] Mujahid has reconciled with the current Afghan government, and serves as one of the deputy leaders of the 70-member High Peace Council on political reconciliation.

By the time of the September 11 attacks, the Taliban controlled at least 75% of the country, including almost all provincial capitals. The Northern Alliance suffered a major setback on September 9, 2001 (two days before, and possibly a part of, the September 11 attacks), when Ahmad Shah Masoud was assassinated by Al Qaeda operatives posing as journalists. He was succeeded by a top lieutenant, Muhammad Fahim, a veteran Tajik figure but who lacked Masoud's charisma and undisputed authority (Fahim died of natural causes in early 2014 while serving as First Vice President).

September 11 Attacks and Operation Enduring Freedom

After the September 11 attacks, the Bush Administration decided to militarily overthrow the Taliban when it refused a U.S. demand to extradite Bin Laden. President Bush articulated a policy that equated those who harbor terrorists to terrorists themselves, and asserted that a friendly regime in Kabul was needed to enable U.S. forces to search for Al Qaeda members there.

The Administration sought U.N. backing for military action. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1368 of September 12, 2001, said that the Council "expresses its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond (implying force) to the September 11 attacks." This was widely interpreted as a U.N. authorization for military action in response to the attacks, but it did not explicitly authorize Operation Enduring Freedom to oust the Taliban. The Resolution did not reference Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, which allows for responses to threats to international peace and security.

In Congress, S.J.Res. 23 (passed 98-0 in the Senate and with no objections in the House, P.L. 107-40, signed September 18, 2011), was somewhat more explicit than the U.N. Resolution, authorizing:[10] "all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 *or harbored such organizations or persons*."

Major Combat Operations: 2001-2003

Major combat in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom, OEF) began on October 7, 2001. The U.S. effort initially consisted primarily of U.S. air-strikes on Taliban and Al Qaeda forces, facilitated by the cooperation between reported small numbers (about 1,000) of U.S. special operations forces and Central Intelligence Agency operatives. The purpose of these operations was to help the Northern Alliance and Pashtun anti-Taliban forces advance by directing U.S. air strikes on Taliban positions. In late October 2001, about 1,300 Marines were deployed to pressure the Taliban at Qandahar, but there were few U.S.-Taliban pitched battles.

The Taliban regime unraveled after it lost Mazar-e-Sharif on November 9, 2001 to forces led by Dostam (mentioned above).[11] Northern Alliance forces—despite promises to then-Secretary of State Colin Powell that they would not enter Kabul—did so on November 12, 2001, to popular jubilation. The Taliban subsequently lost the south and east to U.S.-supported Pashtun leaders, including Hamid Karzai. The Taliban regime ended completely on December 9, 2001, when the Taliban and Mullah Umar fled Qandahar, leaving it under Pashtun tribal law. Subsequently, U.S. and Afghan forces conducted "Operation Anaconda" in the Shah-i-Kot Valley (Paktia Province) during March 2-19, 2002. In March 2003, about 1,000 U.S. troops raided suspected Taliban or Al

[10] Another law (P.L. 107-148) established a "Radio Free Afghanistan" under RFE/RL, providing $17 million in funding for it for FY2002.

[11] In the process, Dostam captured Taliban fighters and imprisoned them in freight containers, causing many to suffocate. They were buried in a mass grave at *Dasht-e-Laili.*

Qaeda fighters in villages around Qandahar (Operation Valiant Strike). On May 1, 2003, U.S. officials declared an end to "major combat."

Afghan Governance[12]

The George W. Bush Administration argued that the U.S. departure from the region after the 1989 Soviet pullout contributed to Afghanistan's descent into chaos. After the Taliban regime was deposed in 2001, the Administration and its international partners decided to build a relatively strong, democratic, Afghan central government. The effort, which many outside experts described as "nation-building," was supported by the United Nations.

The Obama Administration's strategy review in late 2009 initially narrowed official U.S. goals to preventing terrorism safe haven in Afghanistan, but policy in some ways expanded the preexisting nation-building effort. No matter how the U.S. mission has been defined, building the capacity of and reforming Afghan governance have been consistently judged to be key to the success of U.S. policy. These objectives have been stated explicitly in each Obama Administration policy review, strategy statement, and report on progress in Afghanistan, as well as all major international conferences on Afghanistan. **Table 1** briefly depicts the process and events that led to the formation of the post-Taliban government of Afghanistan and subsequent developments.

[12] Detail on governance issues is provided in CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman.

Table 1. Post-Taliban Political Process Milestones

Interim Administration	Formed by Bonn Agreement. Headed by Hamid Karzai, an ethnic Pashtun, but key security positions dominated by mostly minority "Northern Alliance." Karzai reaffirmed as leader by June 2002 "emergency *loya jirga*." (A *jirga* is a traditional Afghan assembly.)
Constitution	Approved by January 2004 "Constitutional *Loya Jirga*" (CLJ). Set up strong presidency without a prime ministership to balance presidential power, but gave parliament significant powers to compensate. Gives men and women equal rights under the law, allows for political parties as long as they are not "un-Islamic;" allows for court rulings according to Hanafi (Sunni) Islam (Chapter 7, Article 15). Named ex-King Zahir Shah to non-hereditary position of "Father of the Nation;" he died July 23, 2007.
Presidential Election	Elections for president and two vice presidents, for five-year term, held October 9, 2004. Turnout was 80% of 10.5 million registered. Karzai and running mates (Ahmad Zia Masoud, a Tajik and brother of legendary *mujahedin* commander Ahmad Shah Masoud, who was assassinated by Al Qaeda two days before the September 11 attacks, and Karim Khalili, a Hazara) elected with 55% against 16 opponents, including a female. Funding: $90 million from donors, including $40 million from U.S. (FY2004, P.L. 108-106).
Parliamentary Elections	Elections held September 18, 2005, on "Single Non-Transferable Vote" System; candidates stood as individuals, not in party list. Parliament consists of a 249 elected lower house (*Wolesi Jirga*, House of the People) and a selected 102 seat upper house (*Meshrano Jirga*, House of Elders). 2,815 candidates for *Wolesi Jirga*, including 347 women. Turnout was 57% (6.8 million voters) of 12.5 million registered. Upper house is appointed by the president (34 seats, half of which are to be women), and by the provincial councils (68 seats). When district councils are elected, they will appoint 34 of those 68 seats. Funded by $160 million in aid, including $45 million from U.S. (FY2005 supplemental, P.L. 109-13).
First Provincial Elections	Provincial elections held September 18, 2005, simultaneous with parliamentary elections. Powers vague, but have taken the lead in deciding local reconstruction. Provincial council sizes range from 9 to the 29 seats on the Kabul provincial council. Total seats are 420, of which 121 held by women. 13,185 candidates, including 279 women. District elections not held due to complexity and potential tensions of drawing district boundaries.
Second Presidential/Provincial Elections	Presidential and provincial elections were held August 20, 2009, but required a runoff because no candidate received over 50% in certified results. Runoff cancelled when Dr. Abdullah dropped out. Election costs: $300 million.
Second Parliamentary Elections	Originally set for May 22, 2010; held September 18, 2010. Result disputed but dispute resolved through Afghan negotiations that overturned results in some districts. Abdul Raouf Ibrahimi, an ethnic Uzbek, is lower house speaker, and upper house speaker is Muslim Yaar, a Pashtun.
Third Presidential/Provincial Election	First round held on April 5, 2014, and runoff between Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani held on June 14. Allegations of widespread fraud not fully resolved by a full recount, but Ghani was declared the winner on September 22 pursuant to a U.S.-brokered power-sharing agreement between Abdullah and Ghani under which Ghani became President and Abdullah became Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Ghani was sworn in on September 29. The two did not nominate a new cabinet until January 12, 2015. A *loya jirga* (traditional Afghan assembly) is to convene within two years (by the end of September 2016) to decide whether to convert the CEO position into a position of Prime Minister.
Third Parliamentary Elections	Originally scheduled for 2015, but tentatively scheduled for October 15, 2016—provided: election reforms are finalized and Afghan election bodies are in place by that time. The existing parliament remains in office in accordance with a June 2015 Ghani decree.

"National Unity Government" of Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah

Virtually every U.S. and outside assessment has concluded that Afghanistan's central and local governments have increased their capacity since 2001. However, the 2014 U.S.-brokered leadership partnership (national unity government, or NUG) between President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Dr. Abdullah Abdullah is troubled—an assessment largely corroborated in comments by Secretary of State John Kerry during his visit to Kabul on April 9, 2016. Earlier, on February 9, 2016, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper testified before the Senate Armed Services

Committee that "Afghanistan is at serious risk of a political breakdown during 2016, occasioned by mounting political, economic, and security challenges." The NUG has remained intact to date, but tensions continue over appointments, priorities, the future of the governing structure, and Ghani's outreach to Pakistan—to the point where some senior officials have resigned in 2016 and joined groups calling for early new presidential elections. One major "opposition" coalition formed in mid-December 2015, consisting mostly of former Karzai allies.[13] Some Afghan figures assert that Ghani has tended to outwardly favor other Pashtuns and has unnecessarily created resentment among the other ethnic minorities.[14]

Some of the turmoil is caused by the fact that Dr. Abdullah's role has appeared unclear as he has struggled to define and assert his authorities. Abdullah loyalists insist on the holding of a *loya jirga* by September 2016, as agreed in the September 2014 power sharing accord, and for meeting to decide to convert Abdullah's post into a formal prime ministership. Other accounts say that Abdullah's role might be elevated to a "first vice-presidency." Some Abdullah supporters criticized Secretary of State Kerry's comments in Kabul on April 9 that the NUG is intended to be of five year duration (the length of a presidential term), appearing to disregard a potential government restructuring that might result from a *loya jirga.*

The legitimacy of the government is also under challenge because of the delay in parliamentary elections, which were originally due by mid-2015. A commission on election reform ("Special Electoral Reform Commission") has been established and has made its recommendations. Ghani accepted seven of the ten initial recommendations but the lower house of parliament voted them down. And, no new Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) or Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) have been appointed. This means that the date the IEC set in January 2016 for new parliamentary elections—October 15, 2016—seems increasingly unlikely to be met. Even if that deadline is met, the *loya jirga* that was to be convened before the end of September 2016 might not be held before the end of 2016—beyond the expiry of the September 2014 compromise that led to the formation of the NUG.

At least some of the tension between Ghani and Abdullah stems from differences over appointments. Ghani and Abdullah jointly agreed to share the role of making the 25 cabinet nominations, and that arrangement brought into play the need to balance competence and factional interests. The first cabinet nominations were delayed until January 12, 2015, well beyond the constitutionally required 30-day period for such nominations (October 28, 2014), causing substantial confusion in governance as acting ministers were left in charge.[15] However, as of April 2016, Ghani and Abdullah have completed appointments to the 34 provincial governorships and the major ambassadorships. On April 9, 2016, the National Assembly confirmed a replacement Interior Minister, Taj Mohammad Jahid, to replace ex-Communist military leader Nur-ul-Haq Ulumi who resigned in February 2016. Also confirmed was an Attorney General, a post bereft of a permanent new minister since the NUG took office.

Still, an appointment to the all-important post of Defense Minister has eluded consensus. The Chief of Staff of the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) Sher Mohammad Karimi was the original nominee, but he was voted down in large part because two Pashtuns—and Rahmat Nabil—were confirmed as Interior Minister and Director of Intelligence. Tajiks in the National

[13] Mujib Mashal. "Kabul Government Faces New Set of Rivals." *New York Times*, December 21, 2015.

[14] Azam Ahmed and Mujib Mashal. "Nostalgia for Karzai Points to Trouble for His Successor." *New York Times*, May 15, 2015.

[15] Sources include various press reports and author conversations with Kabul and Europe-based Afghan observers. January 2015.

Assembly insisted that ethnic balance be maintained. In May 2015, Ghani and Abdullah agreed to nominate Masoom Stanekzai, who headed the government's insurgent fighter reintegration program (discussed below). However, he, too, is an ethnic Pashtun and non-Pashtuns in the National Assembly led a successful effort to vote him down in June 2015. He served as acting Defense Minister until May 2016, when he was named to replace Intelligence Director Rehmat Nabil on an acting basis. Nabil resigned in December 2015, asserting that Ghani is too willing to make concessions to Pakistan. Also in early May 2016, Ghani named Gen. Abdullah as acting Minister of Defense.

The NUG has been somewhat more active than was the Karzai administration on corruption issues. The government has sought to enforce court punishments of the convicted perpetrators of the Kabul Bank scandal. And, press reports indicate that the Major Crimes Task Force has become more active in investigating officials accused of corruption.

Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah

On September 29, 2014, Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmedzai was inaugurated as President, and he appointed Dr. Abdullah Abdullah as CEO.

Ashraf Ghani, born in 1949, is from Lowgar Province. He is from a prominent tribe, belonging to the Ghilzai Pashtun tribal confederation, that has supplied many past Afghan leaders, including the last Soviet-installed leader, Dr. Najibullah Ahmedzai. Ghani attended university at the American University of Beirut, and received a Ph.D. degree in Cultural Anthropology from Columbia University. He joined the World Bank in 1991, where he helped several countries manage development and institutional transformation projects. During 2002-2004, he served as Finance Minister in Karzai's first cabinet and was credited with extensive reforms and institution of the National Solidarity Program of locally driven economic development. He is married to Rula Ghani, and they have two children.

During 2004-2005, he served as chancellor of Kabul University. He subsequently founded the Institute for State Effectiveness, which helps countries undergoing transition build institutions. After 2009, he served as an advisor to Karzai on various initiatives, including institutional reform and relations with the U.S.-led coalition helping secure Afghanistan.

Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, born in 1960 in Kabul, is an eye doctor by training. His mother was an ethnic Tajik and his father was a Pashtun from Qandahar. However, he is widely identified politically as a Tajik because he was a top aide to legendary Tajik mujahedin commander and Northern Alliance military leader Ahmad Shah Masoud, who was assassinated by Al Qaeda two days before the September 11 attacks on the United States. During the Northern Alliance's political struggle against the Taliban during 1996-2001, Abdullah served as the Northern Alliance's foreign minister—Masoud's international envoy. He served as Foreign Minister during 2001-2006, a time when the Northern Alliance's influence on Karzai was substantial. Karzai dismissed him in an early 2006 cabinet reshuffle.

As noted above, Abdullah lost the 2009 presidential election to Karzai, despite widespread confirmed allegations of fraud in that vote. He subsequently became chief opposition leader in Afghanistan.

Sources: Various press reporting, author conversations with Afghan figures in Afghanistan and Washington, DC, 2001-2014. Photographs from http://www.facebook.com/ashrafghani and http://www.facebook.com/Dr.AbdullahAbdullah, respectively.

U.S. and International Civilian Policy Structure

U.S. and international civilian institutions have helped build the capacity of the Afghan government. The U.S. embassy in Kabul, which had closed in 1989 when the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan and was guarded by Afghan caretakers, reopened in late 2001 after the Taliban was ousted. The U.S. Ambassador and other high-ranking U.S. Embassy officials manage not only diplomacy with the Afghan government but also U.S. economic assistance and Embassy operations. Ambassador James Cunningham served during 2012-2014, and was succeeded by his deputy Ambassador, Peter McKinley. Several other Ambassador-level officials serve at the embassy in various capacities.

In February 2009, the Administration set up the position of appointed "Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan" (SRAP), occupied first by Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, reporting to Secretary of State Clinton. Holbrooke died on December 13, 2010, and he was succeeded by, in order: Ambassador Marc Grossman, Ambassador James Dobbins, and SRAP Dan Feldman. In mid-November 2015, Feldman was replaced by U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson.

In line with the U.S. military drawdown, the Administration has sought to "normalize" its presence in Afghanistan. From 2009 to 2014, the U.S. civilian presence expanded to over 1,300 U.S. civilian officials—up from only about 400 in 2009—of which about one-third were serving outside Kabul. Staff levels dropped by about 20% by the completion of the transition in December 2014.

Consulates. In June 2010, Deputy Secretary of State William Burns formally inaugurated a U.S. consulate in Herat city, a location considered pivotal to U.S. engagement with the Tajik and Uzbek minorities of Afghanistan. The State Department spent about $80 million on a facility in Mazar-e-Sharif that was slated to replace the existing facility, but the new site was abandoned because of concerns about the security. Alternative locations for a new Herat consulate are being considered,[16] and additional consulates are planned for the major cities of Qandahar and Jalalabad.

[16] Ernesto Londono. "U.S. Abandons Consulate Plan in Northern Afghanistan." *Washington Post*, May 6, 2012.

Table 2. U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

The United Nations is extensively involved in Afghan governance and national building, primarily in factional conflict resolution and coordination of development assistance. The coordinator of U.N. efforts is the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). During October 2014 until March 2016, the head of UNAMA was Nicholas Haysom, of South Africa. He was succeeded by Tadamichi Yamamoto of Japan. UNAMA's mandate is subject to Security Council renewal, in the form of a U.N. Security Council resolution, at the end of March of each year.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 1806 of March 20, 2008, expanded UNAMA's authority to strengthen cooperation between the international peacekeeping force (ISAF, see below) and the Afghan government. In concert with the Obama Administration's emphasis on Afghan policy, UNAMA opened offices in many of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Resolution 2096 of March 2013 reiterates the expanded UNAMA mandate, while noting that UNAMA and the international community are moving to a supporting role rather than as direct deliverers of services in Afghanistan. Resolution 2096 restated UNAMA's coordinating role with other high-level representatives in Afghanistan and election support role, as well as its role in reintegration of surrendering insurgent fighters through a "Salaam (Peace) Support Group" that coordinates with Afghanistan's High Peace Council (that is promoting reconciliation and reintegration). UNAMA has always been involved in local dispute resolution and disarmament of local militias,

UNAMA is also playing a growing role in engaging regional actors in Afghan stability. It was a co-convener of the January 28, 2010, and July 20, 2010, London and Kabul Conferences, respectively. Along with Turkey, UNAMA chairs a "Regional Working Group" to enlist regional support for Afghan integration.

On development, UNAMA co-chairs the joint Afghan-international community coordination body called the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), and is helping implement Afghanistan's development strategy based on Afghanistan's "National Strategy for Development," presented on June 12, 2008, in Paris. However, UNAMA's donor coordination role did not materialize because of the large numbers and size of donor-run projects in Afghanistan.

For more background on UNAMA, see CRS Report R40747, *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan: Background and Policy Issues*, by Rhoda Margesson.

General Human Rights Issues[17]

Since 2001, U.S. policy has been to build capacity in human rights institutions in Afghanistan and to promote civil society and political participation. As do previous years' State Department human rights reports on Afghanistan, the report for 2015 attributes most of Afghanistan's human rights deficiencies to overall lack of security, loose control over the actions of Afghan security forces, corruption, and cultural attitudes such as discrimination against women. The State Department and UNAMA reports cite widespread examples of torture, rape, and other abuses by officials, security forces, detention center authorities, and police. In 2007, Afghanistan resumed enforcing the death penalty after a four-year moratorium.

One of the institutional human rights developments since the fall of the Taliban has been the establishment of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), headed by a woman, Sima Simar, a Hazara Shiite from Ghazni Province. It is an oversight body on human rights practices but its members are appointed by the government and some believe it is not independent. In addition, there has been a proliferation of Afghan organizations that demand transparency about human rights deficiencies. Prominent examples include the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization, and the Equality for Peace and Democracy organization. It is in part the work of these groups that has produced some responses by the government, for example by establishing "human rights units" in at least one security institution.

Countering the influence of institutions such as the AIHRC are traditional bodies such as the National Ulema Council. The Council consists of the 150 most widely followed clerics throughout Afghanistan, who represent about 3,000 clerics nationwide. It has taken conservative

[17] Much of the information in this section is derived from the State Department report on human rights practices worldwide for 2015. http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253169.pdf.

positions on free expression and social freedoms, such as the type of television and other media programs available in Afghanistan. Clerics sometimes ban performances by Afghan singers and other performers whose acts they consider inconsistent with Islamic values. On the other hand, some rock bands have been allowed to perform high profile shows since 2011. Because of the power of Islamist conservatives, alcohol is increasingly difficult to obtain in restaurants and stores, although it is not banned for sale to non-Muslims.

Advancement of Women

Women's groups are a large component of Afghan civil society. Freedoms for women have greatly expanded since the fall of the Taliban with their elections to the parliament and their service at many levels of government. The Afghan government pursues a policy of promoting equality for women under its National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA). The Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework requires Afghanistan to implement the NAPWA and all of its past commitments and laws to strengthen the rights of women and provide services to them.

The major institutional development was the formation in 2002 of a Ministry of Women's Affairs dedicated to improving women's rights. Its primary function is to promote public awareness of relevant laws and regulations concerning women's rights. It plays a key role in trying to protect women from domestic abuse by overseeing the running of as many as 29 women's shelters across Afghanistan. The Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (AFSA, P.L. 107-327) authorized $15 million per year (FY2003-FY2006) for the Ministry of Women's Affairs—derived from Economic Support Funds (ESF) controlled by USAID. The United States has continued to donate to the Ministry since AFSA expired.

One of the most prominent civil society groups operating in post-Taliban Afghanistan is the Afghanistan Women's Network. It has at least 3,000 members and its leaders say that 75 nongovernmental organizations work under its auspices. In addition, the AIHRC and outside Afghan human rights groups focus extensively on rights for Afghan women.

Among the most notable accomplishments since 2001 is that women are performing jobs that were rarely held by women even before the Taliban came to power in 1996. The civil service is 19% female, although that is below the 30% target level set in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. Women serve in the police force and military, and Afghan female pilots have trained in the United States since 2011. There are over 150 female judges, up from 50 in 2003, and several hundred 500 female journalists nationwide. Women constitute over one-third of the seats of the nationwide Community Development Councils (CDCs, discussed above), in part because each CDC is required to have two women in its executive bodies. Women are legally permitted to drive, and many Afghan women, mainly in larger cities, do so. The wearing of the full body covering called the *burqa* is no longer obligatory, and fewer women are wearing it than was the case a few years ago.

Some groups, such as Human Rights Watch, report backsliding on women's rights over the past seven years.[18] Numerous abuses, such as denial of educational and employment opportunities, continue primarily because of Afghanistan's conservative traditions. This is particularly prevalent in rural areas, and less so in larger urban areas. Along with the assertion of authority of conservative Islamic institutions, on March 2, 2012, the Ulema Council issued a pronouncement saying women should be forced to wear the veil and be forbidden from traveling without a male

[18] "We Have the Promises of the World: Women's Rights in Afghanistan," *Human Rights Watch*, December 2009, http://www.wluml.org/sites/wluml.org/files/hrw_report_2009.pdf.

chaperone. The pronouncement did reiterate support for the rights of women to inherit and own property, and to choose their marital partners. Karzai endorsed the Ulema Council statement.

Among the most widespread abuses reported are the following:

- More than 70% of marriages in Afghanistan are forced, despite laws banning the practice, and a majority of brides are younger than the legal marriage age of 16.
- The practice of *baad*, in which women are given away to marry someone from another clan to settle a dispute, remains prevalent.
- There is no law specifically banning sexual harassment, and women are routinely jailed for *zina*—a term meaning adultery, and a crime under the penal code, and that includes running away from home, defying family choice of a spouse, eloping, or fleeing domestic violence. These incarcerations are despite the fact that running away from home is not a crime under the penal code. Women can be jailed for having a child outside wedlock, even if the child is a product of rape.
- Under the penal code, a man who is convicted of "honor killing" (killing a wife who commits adultery) can be sentenced to no more than two years in prison.
- Women's rights activists have been assassinated on several occasions. On December 10, 2012, the head of the Women's Affairs Ministry department in Laghman Province was gunned down. Her predecessor in that post was killed by a bomb planted in her car four months earlier.

In an effort to prevent these abuses, on August 6, 2009, then-President Karzai issued, as a decree, the "Elimination of Violence Against Women" (EVAW) law that makes many of the practices above unlawful. Partly as a result of the decree, prosecutions of abuses against women are increasingly obtaining convictions. A "High Commission for the Elimination of Violence Against Women" has been established to oversee implementation of the EVAW, and provincial offices of the commission have been established in all but two provinces, according to the March 7, 2014, U.N. report. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has worked with local authorities to improve implementation of the decree.

On the other hand, despite the EVAW decree, only a small percentage of reports of violence against women are registered with the judicial system, and about one-third of those proceed to trial.[19] The number of women jailed for "moral crimes" has increased by 50% since 2011. Efforts by the National Assembly to enact the EVAW in December 2010 and in May 2013 failed due to opposition from Islamic conservatives who assert that males should decide family issues.

Developments During the Ghani/Abdullah Administration. President Ghani has signaled his strong support for women's rights by highlighting in his inaugural speech the support he has received from his wife, Rula Ghani. Some in the audience reportedly opposed making that reference, because Afghan culture considers it taboo to mention wives and female family members in public. Some Afghan conservatives have criticized Ghani because Mrs. Ghani was a Christian whom he met while studying at university in Beirut in the 1970s, and some Afghan clerics allege that there is no public record of her converting to Islam.[20] Ghani sought to implement his commitment to the advancement of women by appointing a female as a member of

[19] Alissa Rubin, "Slow Gains in Justice for Afghan Women," *New York Times*, December 12, 2012, http://unama.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Qy9mDiEa5Rw%3d&tabid=12254&language=en-US.

[20] Declan Walsh and Rod Nordland. "Jolting Some, Afghan Leader Brings Wife into the Picture." *New York Times*, October 15, 2014.

Afghanistan's Supreme Court, but the National Assembly voted her nomination down in July 2015. He has also appointed two female governors—one more than was the case during Karzai's presidency—in Ghor and in Daykundi provinces. However, protests by male faction leaders initially prevented Masooma Muradi, appointed governor of Daykundi, from taking office. There are three female ministers in the NUG cabinet.

Religious Freedoms

According to recent State Department reports on international religious freedom, the constitution and government to some extent restrict religious freedom.[21] The government (Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs) is involved in regulating religious practices. Of Afghanistan's approximately 125,000 mosques, 6,000 are registered and funded by the government. Clerics in these mosques, paid about $100 per month, are expected to promote the government line.

Members of minority religions, including Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, and Baha'i's, often face discrimination, but members of these communities sometimes serve at high levels. Baha'is fare worse than members of some of the other minorities because the Afghan Supreme Court declared the Baha'i faith to be a form of blasphemy in May 2007. There are no public Christian churches and four synagogues, although the synagogues are not used because there is only one Afghan national who is Jewish. Afghan Christians can worship in small congregations in private homes, but several conversion cases drew harsh punishments and earned international attention. There are three active *gurdwaras* (Sikh places of worship) and five Hindu *mandirs* (temples). Buddhist foreigners are free to worship in Hindu temples.

The Hazaras and other Afghan Shiites tend to be less religious and more socially open than their co-religionists in Iran. Afghan Shiite leaders appreciated the July 2009 enactment and "gazetting" of a "Shiite Personal Status Law" that gave Afghan Shiites the same degree of recognition as the Sunni majority, and provided a legal framework for Shiite family law issues. Afghan Shiites are able to celebrate their holidays openly and some have held high positions, but some Pashtuns have become resentful of the open celebrations and some clashes have resulted.

Media Freedoms

Afghanistan's conservative traditions have triggered increased restrictions on media freedoms in recent years, as compared to the early years of post-Taliban Afghanistan. Since 2001, numerous television channels, newspapers, and other media forms have been established, giving Afghanistan one of the freest media in the region. A 2009 Mass Media Law gave independence to the official media outlets but also contained a number of content restrictions and required that new newspapers and electronic media be licensed. According to recent State Department reports on human rights, there continue to be intimidation and some violence against journalists who criticize the central government or powerful local leaders, and some news organizations and newspapers have occasionally been closed for incorrect or derogatory reporting on high officials.

Human Trafficking

Afghanistan was ranked as "Tier 2" in the State Department *Trafficking in Persons Report* for 2015[22] on the grounds that the Afghan government is not complying with minimum standards for

[21] The report for 2014 can be accessed at http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2014&dlid=238488#wrapper

[22] http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/243558.pdf

eliminating trafficking, but is making significant efforts to comply. The report says that women from China, some countries in Africa, Iran, and some countries in Central Asia are being trafficked into Afghanistan for sexual exploitation, although, according to the report, trafficking within Afghanistan is more prevalent than trafficking across its borders. The report asserts that some families knowingly sell their children for forced prostitution, including for *bacha baazi*, a practice in which wealthy men use groups of young boys for social and sexual entertainment. The report added that some members of the ANDSF Forces have sexually abused boys as part of the *bacha baazi* practice—an allegation that received international attention in September 2015 amid reports that U.S. military officers had sought to curb the practice among some ANDSF counterparts. Other reports say that many women have resorted to prostitution, despite the risk of social and religious ostracism or punishment, to cope with economic hardship.

Security Policy: Transition, and Beyond[23]

The stated U.S. policy goal is to prevent terrorist organizations that can plan attacks against the U.S. homeland, partners, and interests from regaining safe haven in Afghanistan. To accomplish that goal, Administration policy is to enable the Afghan government and security forces to defend the country against the insurgency and to govern effectively and transparently. However, the insurgent challenge to stability in Afghanistan has been sustained by a number of factors, including (1) public resentment of corruption in the Afghan government; (2) the small numbers of security forces in many rural areas; (3) logistical and other shortfalls on the part of the ANDSF; (4) safe haven enjoyed by militants in Pakistan; (5) a backlash against civilian casualties caused by military operations; and (6) unrealized economic expectations.

Who Is "The Enemy"?

Security in Afghanistan is challenged by several armed groups that are allied with each other. U.S. commanders assert that, post-2014, their rules of engagement allow for operations against Al Qaeda and associated groups by affiliation, and against the Taliban and other insurgent groups if they pose an imminent threat to U.S. forces or the ANDSF and the Afghan government. As of December 2015, U.S. commanders also have authority to attack members of the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan by affiliation as well.

The Taliban

The insurgency is still led primarily by the Taliban movement. The group was led by Mullah Muhammad Umar, head of the Taliban regime during 1996-2001, until his 2013 death, which was revealed in a July 2015 Taliban announcement. In an informal selection process disputed by some high-ranking Taliban figures, he was succeeded by Akhtar Mohammad Mansour and two deputies—Haqqani Network operational commander Sirajuddin Haqqani, and cleric Haibatullah Akhunzadeh. Opponents of Mansour's selection were centered around Umar's son, Mullah Mohammad Yaqub, who asserted that Pakistan had engineered the "succession," hardline military commander Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir, who had been a U.S. detainee in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba until 2007, Mansour Dadullah, Mullah Najibullah (a.k.a. Umar Khatab) and the top Taliban

[23] Much of the information in this section is taken from U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) reports entitled, "Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan." The latest one was issued in December 2015, covering June 1 to November 30, 2015. http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/1225_Report_Dec_2015_-_Final_20151210.pdf. It will henceforth be referred to in this report as "the latest DOD report on Afghanistan."

military commander since 2014, Ibrahim Sadar. Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri declared his support for Mansour on August 13, 2015, helping rally the dissidents to acquiesce to Mansour's accession. In September 2015, some of Umar's family members altered their stance to support Mansour, and Mansour's position was further strengthened in September 2015 with the Taliban capture of Konduz and gains in Helmand Province.

On May 23, 2016, President Obama confirmed that a U.S. unmanned aerial vehicle strike had killed Mullah Mansour. Several days later, the Taliban confirmed his death and announced the selection of one of his deputies, Akhunzadeh (see above) as the new Taliban leader. The group announced two deputies: Mullah Yaqub (son of Mullah Umar) and Sirajuddin Haqqani. The new leadership announced it would remain committed to battlefield operations and would not return to peace talks that are discussed below. For more information on the leadership transition, see: CRS Insight IN10495, *Taliban Leadership Succession*, by Kenneth Katzman.

Non-Pashtun Taliban. Some press reports also note that there are non-Pashtun anti-government groups operating in northern Afghanistan and other non-Pashtun areas that are affiliated with the Taliban. These non-Pashtun Taliban factions are said to be less ideological than is the core of the Taliban movement in implementing Islamic law and other restrictions in areas under their control.

Pakistani Taliban. A major Pakistani group, the Pakistani Taliban (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, TTP), primarily challenges the government of Pakistan but also supports the Afghan Taliban. Some TTP fighters reportedly operate from safe havens in Taliban-controlled areas on the Afghan side of the border. Based in part on a failed bombing in New York City in May 2010 allegedly by the TTP, the State Department designated the TTP as an FTO on September 2, 2010. Its two prior leaders, Baitullah Mehsud and Hakimullah Mehsud, were killed by U.S. drone strikes in August 2009 and November 2013, respectively. The United States military repatriated to Pakistan in December 2014 a member of the Mehsud clan, Latif Mehsud, and two other Pakistan Taliban militants, who were captured in the course of alleged militant activity in Afghanistan.[24]

Al Qaeda and Associated Groups

The post-2014 U.S. counterterrorism mission in Afghanistan is has been directed primarily against Al Qaeda and its associates in Afghanistan. From its expulsion from its Afghanistan base in 2001 until 2015, Al Qaeda was considered by U.S. officials to have only a minimal presence (fewer than 100) in Afghanistan itself, operating there mostly as a facilitator for insurgent groups, mainly in northeastern Afghanistan. A key Al Qaeda operative, Faruq a-Qahtani al-Qatari, reportedly has worked with Afghan militants to train a new generation of Al Qaeda members in Afghanistan.[25] However, in late 2015 U.S. Special Operations forces and their ANDSF partners discovered and destroyed a large Al Qaeda training camp in Qandahar Province—a discovery that indicated that Al Qaeda had expanded its presence in Afghanistan. In April 2016, U.S. commanders publicly raised their estimates of Al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan to 100-300, and said they are seeing an increasingly close relationship between Al Qaeda and the Taliban.[26]

Until the killing of Bin Laden by U.S. Special Operations Force in Pakistan on May 1, 2011, there had been frustration within the U.S. government with the search for Al Qaeda's top leaders. In December 2001, in the course of the post-September 11 major combat effort, U.S. Special

[24] Associated Press, December 7, 2014.

[25] Kimberly Dozier. "Officials: Al-Qaida Plots Comeback in Afghanistan." *Associated Press*, February 28, 2014.

[26] Press briefing by Resolute Support Mission Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications Brig. Gen. Charles Cleveland. April 14, 2016.

Operations Forces and CIA operatives reportedly narrowed Osama Bin Laden's location to the Tora Bora mountains (30 miles west of the Khyber Pass), but Afghan militia fighters failed to prevent his escape. Some U.S. officials later publicly questioned the U.S. decision to rely mainly on Afghan forces in this engagement.

U.S. efforts to find remaining senior Al Qaeda leaders reportedly focus on his close ally and successor as Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, who is presumed to be on the Pakistani side of the border. A U.S. strike reportedly missed Zawahiri by a few hours in the village of Damadola, Pakistan, in January 2006.[27] Some senior Al Qaeda leaders had been in Iran, including operational chief Sayf al Adl and Sulayman Abu Ghaith, son-in-law of bin Laden and Al Qaeda spokesperson, but both reportedly were forced out of Iran in 2013. Abu Ghaith was subsequently captured by U.S. authorities, but Adl reportedly was traded to Al Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen for Iranians diplomats held there.[28]

U.S. efforts have killed numerous other senior Al Qaeda operatives in recent years. In August 2008, an airstrike was confirmed to have killed Al Qaeda chemical weapons expert Abu Khabab al-Masri. Two senior operatives allegedly involved in the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa reportedly were killed by an unmanned aerial vehicle strike in January 2009. Two top leaders in Al Qaeda—Attiyah Abd al-Rahman and Abu Yahya al-Libi—were killed in Pakistan by reported U.S. drone strikes during 2011 and 2012. U.S. airstrikes in October 2014 killed Al Qaeda operative Abu Bara Al Kuwaiti in Nangarhar Province.

Al Qaeda Affiliated Groups

Some groups that operate in Afghanistan have been affiliated with Al Qaeda.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), is a militant group active primarily against the authoritarian government in Uzbekistan. In Afghanistan, the IMU has been affiliated with Al Qaeda, although in recent months some of its fighters have aligned with the Islamic State branch there. The IMU might have as many as 300 fighters in Konduz Province alone, many of whom reportedly took part in the September 2015 capture of Konduz city, and the IMU is active as well in virtually all the northernmost provinces of Afghanistan. The IMU contingent in Afghanistan reportedly is led by Qari Balal, who escaped from a Pakistani jail in 2010.[29] A splinter IMU group, the Jamaat Ansarullah, is active in Central Asia and northern Afghanistan.[30]

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba. A Pakistani Islamist militant group said to be increasingly active inside Afghanistan is Laskhar-e-Tayyiba (LET, or Army of the Righteous). LET was initially focused on operations against Indian control of Kashmir, but reportedly is increasingly active elsewhere in South Asia and elsewhere. The State Department has stated that the group was responsible for the May 23, 2014, attack on India's consulate in Herat.

[27] Gall, Carlotta and Ismail Khan. "U.S. Drone Attack Missed Zawahiri by Hours." *New York Times*, November 10, 2006.

[28] http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/18/world/middleeast/iran-released-top-members-of-al-qaeda-in-a-trade.html?_r=0

[29] Bill Roggio. "U.S. Military Continues to Claim Al Qaeda is 'Restricted' to 'Isolated Areas of Northeastern Afghanistan." Long War Journal, November 19, 2014.

[30] U.N. report by the sanctions monitoring team established by U.N. resolutions sanctioning the Taliban. U.N. Security Council Document S/2014/888. December 11, 2014.

Lashkar-i-Janghvi. Another Pakistan-based group that is somewhat active in Afghanistan is Lashkar-i-Janghvi. It has conducted some suicide attacks in Afghanistan and was accused of several attacks on Afghanistan's Hazara Shiite community during 2011-2012.

Harakat ul-Jihad Islami (Movement of Islamic Jihad) is a Pakistan-based militant group that trained in Al Qaeda camps. Its former leader, Ilyas Kashmiri, was killed in U.S. drone strike in June 2011. He had earlier been indicted in the United States for supporting LET operative David Coleman Headley, who planned a terrorist attack on a Danish newspaper (*Jyllands-Posten*).

The Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP)

The Islamic State has increased its influence in Afghanistan since mid-2014, acting under the name of Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP, often also referred to as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan, ISIL-K), named after an area that once included parts of what is now Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. ISKP was named as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the State Department on January 14, 2016.

Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi reportedly lived in Kabul during the Taliban regime and cooperated with Al Qaeda there.[31] The group's presence in Afghanistan has crystallized from several small Afghan Taliban and other militant factions—such as Da Fidayano Mahaz and Tora Bora Mahaz—that announced affiliation with the organization in early 2013. The Islamic State presence grew further as additional Taliban factions broke with the Taliban and declared allegiance to the group, including capturing some small areas primarily in eastern Afghanistan. As of late 2015, press reports indicate that Afghan affiliates of the Islamic State have begun receiving financial assistance from the core organization located in the self-declared "caliphate" in parts of Iraq and Syria.[32]

U.S. commanders estimate that there might be 1,000-3,000 ISKP fighters in Afghanistan,[33] with their estimates as of mid-2016 leaning toward the low end of that range.[34] U.S. officials say the Islamic State's goal in Afghanistan is likely to expand its presence further in northeastern Afghanistan as well as in areas east of Qandahar. To address the apparent growing threat from ISKP, as of December 2015 U.S. commanders have authorization to combat ISKP fighters by affiliation, ie., whether or not these fighters pose an immediate threat to U.S. forces, partners, or the ANDSF. According to Brigadier General Cleveland on April 14, 2016, cited above, the United States conducted 100 counter-terrorism strikes from January-March 2016, of which 70 were targeted against ISKP. Brigadier General Cleveland said that the action had reduced the ISKP presence to two to three provinces, from six to eight provinces three months ago.

Press reports indicate that Afghans consider the Taliban's practices in areas of their control as moderate compared to the brutality practiced by Islamic State adherents. Some reports indicated that an Islamic State-linked Afghan faction might have been responsible for a bombing in Jalalabad in April 2015 that killed more than 30 civilians—a bombing that the Taliban leadership condemned. However, subsequent reports left the perpetrators of the attack unclear. U.S. unmanned aerial vehicles reportedly killed a top Islamic State recruiter in Afghanistan on February 9, 2015.

[31] Ibid. p. 12.

[32] Michael Gordon. "Islamic State Building 'Nests' in Afghanistan, U.S. Says." *New York Times*, December 19, 2015.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Briefing by Gen. Cleveland on April 14, 2016, cited above.

Hikmatyar Faction (HIG)

Another significant insurgent leader is former *mujahedin* party leader Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, who leads Hizb-e-Islami-Gulbuddin (HIG). The faction received extensive U.S. support against the Soviet Union, but turned against its *mujahedin* colleagues after the Communist government fell in 1992. The Taliban displaced HIG as the main opposition to the 1992-1996 Rabbani government. In the post-Taliban period, HIG has been ideologically and politically allied with the Taliban insurgents, but HIG fighters sometimes clash with the Taliban over control of territory in HIG's main centers of activity in provinces to the north and east of Kabul. HIG is not widely considered a major factor on the Afghanistan battlefield and has focused primarily on high-profile attacks, such as a suicide bombing on September 18, 2012, which killed 12 persons, including eight South African nationals working for a USAID-chartered air service. HIG claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing in Kabul on May 16, 2013, that killed six Americans (two soldiers and four contractors). On February 19, 2003, the U.S. government formally designated Hikmatyar as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist," under Executive Order 13224, subjecting it to a freeze of any U.S.-based assets. The group is not designated as a "Foreign Terrorist Organization" (FTO).

HIG is widely considered amenable to reconciliation with Kabul. In January 2010, Hikmatyar set conditions for reconciliation, including elections under a neutral caretaker government following a U.S. withdrawal. In March 2010, President Karzai and HIG representatives confirmed talks in Kabul. Some HIG members attended the government's consultative peace *loya jirga* on June 2-4, 2010, which discussed issue of reconciliation. HIG figures met Afghan government representatives at a June 2012 academic conference in Paris and a subsequent meeting in Chantilly, France, in December 2012. In January 2014, Hikmatyar reportedly told his partisans to vote in the April 5, 2014, Afghan elections. In May 2016, it was reported that the government and Hikmatyar were close to finalizing a 25-point reconciliation agreement that could potentially serve as a model for reconciliations between the government and other groups.[35]

Haqqani Network[36]

The "Haqqani Network," founded by Jalaludin Haqqani, a *mujahedin* commander and U.S. ally during the U.S.-backed war against the Soviet occupation, is often cited by U.S. officials as a potent threat to Afghan security and to U.S. and allied forces and interests, and a "critical enabler of Al Qaeda."[37] Jalaluddin Haqqani served in the Taliban regime as Minister of Tribal Affairs, and his network has fought against the current Afghan government. Over the past few years, Jalaludin's son Sirajuddin has largely taken over the group's operations and has become increasingly influential in setting overall insurgency strategy. As noted above Sirajuddin remains deputy leader of the Taliban under the new leader, Mullah Akhunzadeh. Two other sons, Badruddin and Nasruddin, were killed by U.S. and Pakistani operations in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

The deaths of several Haqqani sons and other relatives, combined with U.S.-led operations against the group, have caused some prominent Afghan clans to drift from the Haqqani orbit. The Haqqani Network had about 3,000 fighters and supporters at its zenith during 2004-2010, but it is believed to have far fewer than that currently. However, the network is still capable of carrying

[35] "Afghanistan, Armed Group Set to Finalize Peace Accord." *Associated Press*, May 15, 2016.

[36] A profile of the faction and its activities is provided in: Joshua Partlow. "In Afghan War, Haqqani Group Is 'Resilient' Foe." *Washington Post*, May 30, 2011.

[37] DOD report on Afghan stability, April 2014. p. 12.

out operations, particularly those focused on Kabul. The network's earns funds through licit and illicit businesses in the areas of Afghanistan where it has a presence as well as in Pakistan and the Persian Gulf.

Suggesting it often acts as a tool of Pakistani interests, the Haqqani network has targeted several Indian interests in Afghanistan. The network claimed responsibility for two attacks on India's embassy in Kabul (July 2008 and October 2009), and is considered the likely perpetrator of the August 4, 2013, attack on India's consulate in Jalalabad. U.S. officials also attributed to the group the June 28, 2011, attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul; a September 10, 2011, truck bombing in Wardak Province (which injured 77 U.S. soldiers); and attacks on the U.S. Embassy and ISAF headquarters in Kabul on September 13, 2011.

The attacks on Indian interests tends to support the views of those who allege that it has ties to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), which might view the Haqqanis as a potential ally in Afghanistan. Then Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mullen, following September 2011 attacks on U.S. Embassy Kabul, testified (Senate Armed Services Committee, September 22, 2011), that the Haqqani network acts "as a veritable arm" of the ISI. Other U.S. officials issued more cautious versions of that assertion.

Haqqani commanders have reportedly told journalists that the Haqqani Network would participate in political settlement talks with the United States if the Taliban decided to undertake such talks.[38] However, the faction's participation in any settlement could potentially be complicated by its designation as an FTO under the Immigration and Naturalization Act. That designation was made on September 9, 2012, after the 112th Congress enacted S. 1959 (Haqqani Network Terrorist Designation Act of 2012), on August 10, 2012 (P.L. 112-168). That law required, within 30 days of enactment, an Administration report on whether the group meets the criteria for FTO designation and an explanation of a negative decision.

Insurgent Tactics

U.S. commanders express substantial concern about insurgent use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including roadside bombs. In January 2010, then President Karzai issued a decree banning importation of fertilizer chemicals (ammonium nitrate) commonly used for the roadside bombs, but there reportedly is informal circumvention of the ban for certain civilian uses, and the material reportedly still comes into Afghanistan from production plants in Pakistan. U.S. commanders have said they have verified some use of surface-to-air missiles,[39] although missiles apparently were not used in the Taliban's downing of a U.S. Chinook helicopter that killed 30 U.S. soldiers on August 6, 2011.

Some insurgents have used bombs hidden in turbans, which generally are not searched out of respect for Afghan religious traditions and out of respect for visitors and guests to Afghan functions. Such a bomb killed former President Rabbani on September 20, 2011, and then-President Karzai's cousin Hashmat Karzai on July 29, 2014. A suicide bomber who wounded then-intelligence chief Asadullah Khalid in December 2012 had explosives implanted in his body.

Another major concern has been "insider attacks" (attacks on ISAF forces by Afghan security personnel, also known as "green on blue" attacks).[40] These attacks, some of which apparently

[38] Jibran Ahmad. "Afghan Haqqani Factions Would Consider Talks Under Taliban." Reuters, November 13, 2012.

[39] Major General John Campbell, commander of RC-E, July 28, 2010, press briefing.

[40] For more information on the insider attack, see CRS General Distribution memorandum "Insider Attacks in Afghanistan," October 1, 2012, available on request.

were carried out by Taliban infiltrators into the Afghan forces, were particularly frequent in 2012. On August 5, 2014, an apparent insider attack killed Major General Harold Greene during his visit to Afghanistan's most prestigious military academy outside Kabul.

Insurgent Financing: Narcotics Trafficking and Other Methods[41]

All of the insurgent groups in Afghanistan benefit, at least in part, from narcotics trafficking. However, the adverse effects are not limited to funding insurgents; the trafficking also undermines rule of law within government ranks. The trafficking generates an estimated $70 million-$100 million per year for insurgents—perhaps about 25% of the insurgents' budgets that is estimated by some U.N. officials at about $400 million. For a detailed analysis of narcotics issue and U.S. and coalition counternarcotics efforts, see CRS Report R43540, *Afghanistan: Drug Trafficking and the 2014 Transition*, by Liana W. Rosen and Kenneth Katzman.

The Obama Administration has also sought to reduce other sources of Taliban funding, including continued donations from wealthy residents of the Persian Gulf. On June 29, 2012, the Administration sanctioned (by designating them as terrorism supporting entities under Executive Order 13224) two money exchange networks (*hawalas*) in Afghanistan and Pakistan allegedly used by the Taliban to move its funds earned from narcotics and other sources.

The Anti-Taliban Military Effort: 2003-2009

During 2003 to mid-2006, U.S. forces and Afghan troops fought relatively low levels of insurgent violence with focused combat operations mainly in the south and east where ethnic Pashtuns predominate. These included "Operation Mountain Viper" (August 2003); "Operation Avalanche" (December 2003); "Operation Mountain Storm" (March-July 2004); "Operation Lightning Freedom" (December 2004-February 2005); and "Operation Pil" (Elephant, October 2005). By late 2005, U.S. and partner commanders considered the insurgency mostly defeated and NATO/ISAF assumed lead responsibility for security in all of Afghanistan during 2005-2006. The optimistic assessments proved misplaced when violence increased significantly in mid-2006. NATO-led operations during 2006-2008 cleared key districts but did not prevent subsequent re-infiltration. NATO/ISAF also tried preemptive combat and increased development work, without durable success. U.S. concern was reflected in a September 2008 comment by then-Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Admiral Mike Mullen that "I'm not sure we're winning" in Afghanistan.

Taking into account security deterioration, the United States and its partners increased force levels. U.S. troop levels started 2006 at 30,000 and increased to 39,000 by April 2009. Partner forces also increased during that period to 39,000 at the end of 2009—rough parity with U.S. forces. In September 2008, the U.S. military and NATO each began strategy reviews, which were briefed to the incoming Obama Administration.

[41] For detail on the issue of Afghanistan counternarcotics, see CRS Report R43540, *Afghanistan: Drug Trafficking and the 2014 Transition*, by Liana W. Rosen and Kenneth Katzman.

Table 3. Background on NATO Participation and U.N. Mandate

Partner forces have always been key to the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. During 2006-2014, most U.S. troops in Afghanistan served in the NATO-led "International Security Assistance Force" (ISAF), which consisted of all 28 NATO members states plus partner countries—a total of 50 countries including the United States. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which ended its mission at the end of 2014, was created by the Bonn Agreement and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 (December 20, 2001, a Chapter 7 resolution),[42] initially limited to Kabul. In October 2003, after Germany agreed to contribute 450 military personnel to expand ISAF into the city of Konduz, ISAF contributors endorsed expanding its presence to several other cities, as authorized on October 14, 2003, by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1510. In August 2003, NATO took over command of ISAF—previously the ISAF command rotated among donor forces including Turkey and Britain.

NATO/ISAF's responsibilities broadened significantly in 2004 with NATO/ISAF's assumption of security responsibility for northern and western Afghanistan (Stage 1, Regional Command North, in 2004 and Stage 2, Regional Command West, in 2005, respectively). The transition process continued on July 31, 2006, with the formal handover of the security mission in southern Afghanistan to NATO/ISAF control. As part of this "Stage 3," a British/Canadian/Dutch-led "Regional Command South" (RC-S) was formed for Helmand, Qandahar, and Uruzgan. All three rotated the command of RC-S. "Stage 4," the assumption of NATO/ISAF command of peacekeeping in 14 provinces of eastern Afghanistan (and thus all of Afghanistan) was completed on October 5, 2006.

The ISAF mission was renewed yearly by U.N. Security Council resolutions. Resolution 2069 of October 10, 2013, was the last renewal until the ISAF mission ended at the end of 2014. Resolution 2189 of December 12, 2014, welcomed the establishment of the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) as the follow-on to ISAF.

Obama Administration Policy: "Surge," Transition, and Drawdown

Upon taking office, the Obama Administration maintained that the Afghanistan mission merited a high priority, but that the U.S. level of effort there be reduced over time. The Administration integrated the late 2008 policy reviews into a 60-day inter-agency "strategy review," chaired by South Asia expert Bruce Riedel and co-chaired by then-SRAP Holbrooke and then-Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy. President Obama announced a "comprehensive" strategy on March 27, 2009,[43] that announced deployment of an additional 21,000 U.S. forces.

In June 2009, General Stanley McChrystal, who headed U.S. Special Operations forces from 2003 to 2008, replaced General McKiernan as top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan. In August 2009, General McChrystal delivered a strategy assessment that recommended that the goal of the U.S. military should be to protect the population rather than to focus on searching out and combating Taliban concentrations and that there is potential for "mission failure" unless a fully resourced, comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy is pursued and reverses Taliban momentum within 12-18 months. His assessment stated that about 44,000 additional U.S. combat troops would be needed to provide the greatest chance for success.[44]

The assessment set off debate within the Administration and another policy review. Some senior U.S. officials, such as then-Secretary of Defense Gates, argued that adding many more U.S. forces could produce a potentially counterproductive sense of "U.S. occupation." President Obama announced the following at West Point academy on December 1, 2009:[45]

[42] Its mandate was extended until October 13, 2006, by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1623 (September 13, 2005); and until October 13, 2007, by Resolution 1707 (September 12, 2006).

[43] "White Paper," http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf.

[44] Commander NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, and U.S. Forces, Afghanistan. "Commander's Initial Assessment." August 30, 2009, available at http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/Assessment_Redacted_092109.pdf?.

[45] President Obama speech, op. cit. Testimony of Secretary Gates, Secretary Clinton, and Admiral Mullen before the (continued...)

- That 30,000 additional U.S. forces (a "surge") would be sent to "reverse the Taliban's momentum" and strengthen the capacity of the ANDSF. The addition brought U.S. force levels to 100,000, with a significant portion of the extra forces deployed to the provinces of southern Afghanistan.
- There would be a transition, beginning in July 2011, to Afghan leadership of the stabilization effort and a corresponding drawdown of U.S. force levels. The Obama Administration argued this transition would compel the Afghan government to place greater effort on training its own forces, but Afghan and regional officials asserted that the deadline signaled a rapid decrease in U.S. involvement.[46] To address the Afghan assertions, the November 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon decided on a gradual transition to Afghan leadership that would be completed by the end of 2014.

When the surge was announced, the Afghan Interior Ministry estimated that the government controlled about 30% of the country, while insurgents controlled 4% (13 out of 364 districts) and influenced or operated in another 30%, and tribes and local groups with varying degrees of loyalty to the central government controlled the remainder. The Taliban had named "shadow governors" in 33 out of 34 of Afghanistan's provinces, although many provinces in northern Afghanistan were assessed as having minimal Taliban presence.

Recent and Current U.S. Command in Afghanistan

On June 23, 2010, President Obama accepted the resignation of General McChrystal after comments by him and his staff to *Rolling Stone* magazine that disparaged several U.S. civilian policymakers on Afghanistan. General Petraeus was named General McChrystal's successor and assumed command on July 4, 2010. In August 2014, General John Campbell succeeded Marine General Joseph Dunford as top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan. As of October 2015, General Dunford is Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In January 2016, General John "Mick" Nicholson was named to replace Campbell and his confirmation hearings were held in the Senate Armed Services Committee on January 28, 2016. He assumed command on March 2, 2016, and pledged to have his assessment of the security situation and recommendations prepared within 90 days of that time (early June).

Transition and Drawdown: Afghans in the Lead

The 2009-2011 surge was assessed as having reduced areas under Taliban control or influence substantially and the transition to Afghan security leadership began on schedule in July 2011. The transition was divided into five "tranches"—March 2011, November 2011, May 2012, December 2012, and June 2013. In each tranche, the process of completing the transition to Afghan responsibility took 12-18 months. Then-President Karzai announced on June 18, 2013, that Afghan forces had formally assumed the lead role throughout Afghanistan. In concert with the transition, and asserting that the killing of Osama Bin Laden represented a key accomplishment of the core U.S. mission, on June 22, 2011, President Obama announced that

(...continued)

Senate Armed Services Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. December 2, 2009.

[46] Commander NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, and U.S. Forces, Afghanistan. Commander's Initial Assessment." August 30, 2009, available at http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/Assessment_Redacted_092109.pdf. White House. Remarks by the President In Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan. December 1, 2009.

- 10,000 U.S. forces would be withdrawn by the end of 2011. That drawdown brought U.S. force levels down to 90,000.
- 23,000 forces (the remainder of the surge forces) would be withdrawn by September 2012. This brought down U.S. force levels to 68,000.
- In the February 12, 2013, State of the Union message, President Obama announced that U.S. force level would drop to 34,000 by February 2014, which occurred.

Partner countries drew down their forces at roughly the same rate and proportion as the U.S. drawdown, despite public pressure in the European countries to end or reduce military involvement in Afghanistan. Still, during 2010-2012, the Netherlands, Canada, and France, respectively, ended their combat missions, although they continued to furnish trainers for the ANDSF until the end of 2014. South Korea ended its security mission in Parwan Province, near Bagram Airfield, in June 2014. Its hospital and development experts remained until 2016. Partner forces that continued to conduct combat until the end of 2014 included Britain, Canada, Poland, Denmark, Romania, and Australia. As noted below, several countries are contributing trainers and advisers to the Resolute Support Mission. Partner forces are listed in **Table 13**.

Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and Further Drawdown Planned

As international forces were drawn down in 2014, Afghan officials expressed increasing concerns about U.S. and partner plans for the post-2014 period. On May 27, 2014, President Obama announced the size of the post-2014 U.S. force and plan for an eventual U.S. military exit from Afghanistan after 2016. He asserted that a full military departure from Afghanistan would free up U.S. resources for anti-terrorism missions elsewhere and focus the Afghans on improving their training and organization that they require to operate on their own after 2016. According to the President's May 2014 announcement:[47]

- The U.S. military contingent in Afghanistan would be 9,800 in 2015, deployed in various parts of Afghanistan, consisting mostly of trainers as part of the "Resolute Support Mission" (RSM). About 2,000 of the U.S. force would be Special Operations Forces, of which half conduct counterterrorism missions.[48] The U.S. military renamed the Afghanistan and related operations "Operation Freedom's Sentinel"—replacing the post-September 11 mission Operation Enduring Freedom. The U.S. force was planned to decline to about 5,000 by the end of 2016 and to consolidate in Kabul and at Bagram Airfield.
- After 2016, the U.S. military presence was to decline to one consistent with normal security relations with Afghanistan—a figure assessed at about 1,000 by experts. The forces are to be under U.S. Chief-of-Mission authority, without separate U.S. or NATO military chain of command in country, tasked with protecting U.S. installations, processing Foreign Military Sales (FMS) of weaponry to Afghanistan, and training the Afghans on the use of that weaponry.

The NATO summit in Wales September 4-5, 2014, announced that the total RSM force in 2015 would be about 13,000. Of the 6,000+ non-U.S. forces in RSM, Turkey leads RSM in the Kabul area; Germany leads in the north; and Italy leads in the west. About 40 nations are contributing

[47] http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/27/statement-president-afghanistan.

[48] Votel Pledges Support for Special Operations Forces. DOD News, July 10, 2014.

forces to RSM—nearly as many countries as contributed to ISAF. In concert with this transition, the "regional commands" discussed above have been renamed "Train, Advise, and Assist Commands" (TAACs).

During 2014, the United States and its partners prepared for the end of the ISAF mission. U.S. airpower in country was reduced, although hundreds of U.S. combat aircraft in the Persian Gulf region remain involved in the Afghanistan mission.[49] ISAF turned over the vast majority of the about 800 bases to the ANDSF, and the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), discussed below, were turned over to Afghan institutions.

Adjustments to the 2015, 2016, and Post-2016 Force Levels and Missions

U.S. and other concerns about the post-2014 drawdown plan intensified after the June 2014 collapse of a large portion of the Iraqi Security Forces in the face of an offensive by Islamic State fighters. Critics of Administration plans for Afghanistan force levels asserted that the decision to leave no significant residual troop force in Iraq after 2011 contributed to the growth of the Islamic State's strength there, and that such events could be replicated in Afghanistan if the post-2016 U.S. force is too small.

Despite assertions by U.S. commanders that the ANDSF is generally performing well, concerns of U.S. commanders and outside observers have grown since early 2015. The Taliban has made gains in several districts of northern Helmand Province, and the Taliban capture of Konduz city in in September 2015 was the first seizure of a significant city since the Taliban regime fell in 2001. The city was recaptured by the ANDSF, with RSM support, in subsequent weeks. The expansion of the Islamic State presence in Afghanistan has posed a further threat to the ANDSF and the Afghan government. Taliban forces have also been able to capture parts of the Kabul-Qandahar highway and encroach on other major urban areas. On the other hand, Brigadier General Cleveland, in his April 14, 2016, briefing mentioned earlier, said that the historically restive provinces of Qandahar, Ghazni, Khost, Paktia, and Paktika had been relatively calm over the prior six months. No U.S. official has assessed that the insurgency, by itself, poses a threat to overturn the Afghan governing structure. In early April 2016, the Taliban announced the start of its "spring offensive" for the year, but U.S. commanders say that, in 2016, the ANDSF began pre-emptive operations that it is hoped will blunt the force of the offensive. The killing of Taliban leader Mullah Mansour by a U.S. strike in May 2016 demonstrates Taliban vulnerabilities to U.S. intelligence and combat capabilities, but is not expected to have a measurable effect on Taliban battlefield operations or effectiveness.

In order to try to cope with insurgent challenges, the Afghan government reportedly has encouraged the reorganizing of local factional militias in areas where government control is being challenged.[50] Among the faction leaders said to be reconstituting militia forces are Balkh Province governor Atta Mohammad Noor, Herat leader Ismail Khan, and first Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostam. These militias could spark ethnic and communal conflict and both reflect and accelerate a diminishment of authority on the part of elected leaders. And, the arbitrary administration of justice by militia leaders is said to often spark increased public support for the insurgency.

[49] C.J. Chivers. "Afghan Conflict Losing Air Power as U.S. Pulls Out." *New York Times*, July 7, 2012.

[50] "Afghans Forming Militias to Fight Against Taliban." *New York Times*, May 25, 2015.

Alteration to the Drawdown Schedule and Rules of Engagement

The concerns about insurgent gains have led to several recent alterations in the U.S. mission.

- In November 2014, President Obama reportedly authorized all U.S. forces in Afghanistan (not just counterterrorism units) to carry out combat missions (if and when they or the Afghan government are presented with a direct threat) and are not strictly limited to their training and advisory missions. The President also reportedly authorized ongoing support from U.S. combat aircraft (and drones)—soothing Afghan concerns that a removal of U.S. airpower from Afghanistan would place the ANDSF at risk.[51]
- In concert with the March 23-27 visit to Washington, DC, of Ghani and Abdullah, the President announced on March 24, 2015, that U.S. forces would remain at a level of about 9,800 for all of 2015 (the current level), rather than draw down to 5,000 by the end of the year, as originally announced. The force would remain deployed in major areas of Afghanistan throughout 2015 rather than consolidate to Kabul and Bagram by the end of 2015. According to President Obama, the "specific trajectory of the 2016 drawdown will be established later [in 2015] to enable our final consolidation to a Kabul-based embassy presence by the end of 2016."[52] It was also announced that Secretary of Defense Carter would resume the Security Consultative Forum, a strategic U.S.-Afghanistan defense dialogue begun in May 2010, with Afghanistan's Defense and Interior Ministries.
- On October 15, 2015, President Obama announced that the Afghan government and people wanted and merited ongoing U.S. support and that (1) the force level would remain at about 10,000 until nearly the end of 2016; and (2) the post-2016 force level would be 5,500[53] and it would continue the current missions of enabling the ANDSF and combatting Al Qaeda and associated groups. No date for any subsequent drawdown was announced then, or since. Press reports indicate the cost to operate the post-2016 force would be about $15 billion per year.[54] According to President Obama, the post-2016 U.S. force would operate out of Bagram Airfield, Jalalabad, and Qandahar.
- In January 2016, as noted above, U.S. commanders in Afghanistan were given authorization to attack ISKP forces by affiliation, as noted above.
- In February 2016, the United States and several partners announced a deployment of several hundred forces from their bases elsewhere to Helmand to assist special operations forces combatting insurgents there. The redeployment does not change the total force in Afghanistan, and the additional forces will continue to be limited to advising and assisting rather than direct combat.

[51] Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt. "In Secret, Obama Extends U.S. Role in Afghan Combat." *New York Times*, November 22, 2014.

[52] White House. "Remarks by President Obama and President Ghani of Afghanistan in Joint Press Conference." March 24, 2015.

[53] Statement by President Obama. October 15, 2015.

[54] Greg Jaffe and Missy Ryan, "Obama Expected to Announce New Plan to Keep 5,500 Troops in Afghanistan," The Washington Post, October 15, 2015.

Continued Debate Over Mission Size and Scope

Amid U.S. commander and intelligence community estimates that the security situation continues to deteriorate, the debate over the size and scope of the post-2016 U.S. force has continued in early 2016. The top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan, General Nicholson, and his predecessor, General Campbell, both testified before Congress in early 2016 that they support options that would keep a larger U.S. force in Afghanistan beyond 2016 than is now planned (5,500). General Nicholson testified that his new assessment of the security situation (due in early June 2016) would make recommendations on the post-2016 mission size and scope. Many observers speculate that he will recommend that the United States keep U.S. force levels at the 10,000 level indefinitely. The issues of the size of the U.S. and partner military presence in Afghanistan are likely to be discussed at the NATO summit meeting in June 2016. The House-passed FY2017 Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 4909), expresses the sense of Congress to keep U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan at the 9,800 (current) level after 2016.

Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA)

The post-2014 U.S. military presence is based on a Bilateral Security Accord (BSA). Ex-President Karzai refused to sign the document even though Afghanistan and the United States had agreed in November 2013 on issues such as U.S. operational authority and legal immunities for U.S. forces in Afghanistan. The immunity issue was a nonnegotiable U.S. requirement that was authorized by a special *loya jirga* in November 2013.[55] After the resolution of the 2014 election dispute, the document—as well as a similar document providing for the presence of NATO forces—was signed on September 30, 2014, between U.S. Ambassador Cunningham and Ghani's National Security Advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar. Afghanistan's parliament ratified the BSA in late November 2014, and it was considered by the Administration as an executive agreement and was not submitted for Senate ratification as a treayy. During the March 2015 visit of Ghani and Abdullah, the Administration announced that the U.S and Afghan governments agreed to form the bilateral Joint Commission stipulated by the BSA to oversee the implementation of that agreement.

Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)

The BSA followed a broader "Strategic Partnership Agreement" (SPA) signed by President Obama and President Karzai in Afghanistan on May 1, 2012. The SPA, with a duration until the end of 2024, signaled a U.S. commitment to Afghan stability and development for many years after the transition is complete. The SPA was completed after more than one year of negotiations that focused on resolution of two main disagreements—Afghan insistence on control over detention centers and a halt to or control over nighttime raids on insurgents by U.S. forces. The SPA agreement also demonstrated U.S.-Afghan ability to overcome public Afghan discomfort over such issues as the March 2011 burning of a Quran by a Florida pastor; the mistaken burning by U.S. soldiers of several Qurans on February 20, 2012; and the March 11, 2012, killing of 16 Afghans by U.S. officer Sergeant Robert Bales, who was arrested and tried in the United States.

The major SPA provisions include[56]

- A commitment to continue to foster U.S.-Afghan "close cooperation" to secure Afghanistan. This strongly implied, but did not state outright, that U.S. troops

[55] Anne Gearan. "U.S., Afghanistan Reach Post-2014 Security Accord." *Washington Post*, October 13, 2013.

[56] The text is at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012.06.01u.s.-afghanistanspasignedtext.pdf.

would remain in Afghanistan after 2014. No U.S. troop numbers were mentioned in the document.

- A U.S. commitment to request appropriations to provide training and arms to the Afghan security forces. The agreement did not stipulate dollar amounts or which systems are to be provided.
- U.S. designation of Afghanistan as a "Major Non-NATO Ally," a designation reserved for close U.S. allies. In keeping with that pledge, on July 7, 2012, then-Secretary Clinton announced that designation, opening Afghanistan to receive (sale, donation) U.S. weaponry of the same level of sophistication as that sold to U.S. NATO allies, and facilitating U.S. training and leasing of defense articles.
- A U.S. pledge not to establish "permanent" U.S. bases or use Afghan facilities against neighboring countries. The agreement allows long-term U.S. use of Afghan facilities. Over the past several years, successive National Defense Authorization Acts have contained provisions explicitly prohibiting the U.S. establishment of permanent bases in Afghanistan.
- A U.S. commitment to request economic aid for Afghanistan for the duration of the agreement (2014-2024). No amounts were specified in the document.
- A commitment to form a U.S.-Afghanistan Bilateral Commission to monitor implementation of the SPA. Secretary of State Kerry's visit to Kabul on April 9, 2016, was partly for the purpose of convening the Commission—the first such meeting since May 2013.

In October 2011, Karzai called a *loya jirga* to endorse the concept of the SPA as well as his insistence on Afghan control over detentions and approval authority for U.S.-led night raids. A November 16-19, 2011, traditional *loya jirga* (the *jirga* was conducted not in accordance with the constitution and its views are therefore nonbinding), consisting of about 2,030 delegates, gave Karzai the approvals he sought, both for the pact itself and his suggested conditions. The final SPA was ratified by the Afghanistan National Assembly on May 26, 2012, by a vote of 180-4.

The SPA replaced an earlier, more limited strategic partnership agreement established on May 23, 2005, when Karzai and President Bush issued a "joint declaration."[57] The declaration provided for U.S. forces to have access to Afghan military facilities, in order to prosecute "the war against international terror and the struggle against violent extremism." Karzai's signing of the declaration was supported by the 1,000 Afghan representatives on May 8, 2005, at a consultative *jirga* in Kabul. The *jirga* supported an indefinite presence of international forces to maintain security but urged Karzai to delay a firm decision to request such a presence.

[57] See http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/afghanistan/WH/20050523-2.pdf.

Table 4. Summary of U.S. Strategy and Implementation

Stated and Implied Goals: To prevent Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups from again taking root in Afghanistan and being able to plan attacks on the United States, and to prevent the Taliban insurgency from overthrowing the Afghan government.

U.S. Strategy Implementation: U.S. forces in Afghanistan are training, advising, and assisting the ANDSF to secure Afghanistan and to conduct counterterrorism operations against Al Qaeda and the Islamic State-Khorasan Province. Combat is also authorized to counter imminent Taliban and other insurgent threats to U.S. forces and to Afghan forces and the Afghan government.

Drawdown and Provision of U.S. Enablers: Following the 2009 "surge," U.S. force levels reached a high of 100,000 in mid-2011, then fell to 68,000 ("surge recovery) by September 20, 2012, and to 34,000 by February 2014. Current U.S. force level is about 9,800 plus about 6,400 forces from NATO partners in the "Resolute Support Mission." The U.S. force will remain at about 9,800 during 2015 and at least most of 2016. The size of the U.S. force is currently planned to decline to 5,500 by the end of 2016 and remain at that level for an undetermined period of time.

Long-Term Broad Engagement: The SPA (see above) pledges U.S. security and economic assistance to Afghanistan until 2024. U.S. economic and Afghan force train and equip funding pledged by U.S. to remain roughly at current levels (about $6 billion total) through FY2017.

Political Settlement/Pakistan Cooperation: U.S. policy is to support a political settlement between the Afghan government and the Taliban. As part of that effort, U.S. officials attempt to enlist Pakistan's commitment to deny safe haven in Pakistan to Afghan militants and to promote talks between the Afghan government and Taliban representatives.

Economic Development: U.S. policy supports Afghan efforts to build an economy that can be self-sufficient by 2024 by further developing agriculture, collecting corporate taxes and customs duties, exploiting vast mineral deposits, expanding small industries, and integrating Afghanistan into regional diplomatic and trading and investment structures.

Building Afghan Forces and Establishing Rule of Law

Key to the security of Afghanistan is the effectiveness of the ANDSF, which consists primarily of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). Among the major concerns raised in DOD and other reports is that about 35% of the force does not reenlist each year. The need for rapid recruitment might inhibit thorough vetting or selections of the most qualified personnel. Some of the ANDSF's deficiencies are a function of widespread illiteracy within it, which prompted an increasing focus on providing literacy training (as of 2010). The goal was to have all ANDSF have at least first-grade literacy, and half to have third-grade literacy, by the end of 2014. That goal was not met, but literacy in the ANDSF has been improved by the program, by all accounts. In addition, U.S. commanders say that the ANDSF suffered about 5,500 combat deaths in 2015—a level they call "unsustainable." However, U.S. commanders say that despite taking heavy losses, no units or groups of units collapsed or conducted any disorganized retreats in the face of Taliban offensives.

U.S. commanders frequently note concerns about the ANDSF's deficit of logistical capabilities, such as airlift, medical evacuation, resupply, and other associated functions. Many units also still suffer from a shortfall in weaponry, spare parts, and fuel.

The training component of RSM supersedes the prior training institutions such as the "Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan" (CSTC-A) and the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A). In 2012, CSTC-A's mission was reoriented to building the capacity of the Afghan Defense and Interior Ministries, and to provide resources to the ANDSF.

Size of the ANDSF

On January 21, 2010, the joint U.N.-Afghan "Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board" (JCMB) agreed that, by October 2011, the ANA would expand to 171,600 and the ANP to about 134,000, (total ANDSF of 305,600). Both forces reached that level by September 2011. In August 2011, a larger target size of 352,000 (195,000 ANA and 157,000 ANP) was set, to be reached by

November 2012. The size of the forces—which do not include the approximately 30,000 local security forces discussed below—is about 10% below these target levels.

A higher ANDSF target level of 378,000 was discussed within NATO but not adopted because of the concerns about the Afghan ability to sustain so large a force. In the run-up to the May 20-21, 2012, NATO summit in Chicago, there was initial agreement to reduce the total ANDSF to 228,500 by 2017. However, based on assessments of the difficulty of securing Afghanistan, the February 21, 2013, NATO meeting reversed that decision. About 1,700 women serve in the ANDSF, of which about 1,370 are police.

ANDSF Top Leadership and Ethnic Issues

In the immediate aftermath of the 2001 ousting of the Taliban regime, Northern Alliance figures took key security positions and weighted recruitment for the new ANDSF toward ethnic Tajiks. Many Pashtuns, in reaction, refused recruitment, but the naming of a Pashtun, Abdul Rahim Wardak, as Defense Minister in December 2004 mitigated that difficulty. The problem was further alleviated with better pay and more close involvement by U.S. forces, and the force is ethnically integrated in each unit. According to recent DOD reports, the overall ANDSF force is now roughly in line with the ethnic composition of Afghanistan, although Tajiks are slightly overrepresented in the command ranks. Some of the difficulties in forming a new cabinet after the national unity government was formed in September 2014 have concerned maintaining ethnic balance in the leadership of the security services, as discussed above.

ANDSF Funding

The FY2015 costs of the ANDSF are about $5.4 billion, which is expected to fall to about $5.0 billion in FY2016. The Administration is contributing $4.1 billion for the ANDSF for FY2015 and is providing $3.65 billion for FY2016, as stipulated in the Consolidated Appropriation for FY2016 (P.L. 114-113)—slightly lower than the $3.75 billion requested by the Administration. In FY2017, the Administration has requested about $3.45 billion for the ANDSF. U.S. partners have pledged $1.25 billion annually for the ANDSF during 2015-2017,[58] and Afghanistan has reaffirmed it will contribute $500 million for 2015, despite budgetary difficulties. During the Ghani and Abdullah visit to the United States in March 2015, the Administration reaffirmed that it would seek continued funding for a 352,000 person ANDSF at least through 2017, according to an Administration fact sheet.

According to DOD, as of FY2014, all U.S. funding for the ANDSF is subject to the "Leahy Law" that requires withholding of U.S. funding for any unit of a foreign force that, according to credible information, has committed a gross violation of human rights. As of FY2005, the security forces funding has been DOD funds, not State Department-controlled funds (Foreign Military Financing, FMF).

Other Contributions: NATO Trust Fund for the ANA and Law and Order Trust Fund for the ANP

In 2007 ISAF set up a trust fund for donor contributions to fund the transportation of equipment donated to and the training of the ANA; the mandate was expanded in 2009 to include sustainment costs and in 2010 to support literacy training for the ANA. Since the inception of the

[58] White House Office of the Press Secretary. "Fact Sheet: Wales Summit—NATO's Changing Role in Afghanistan." September 4, 2014.

fund, 26 donor nations have given the ANA Trust Fund about $1 billion, according to the DOD report on Afghanistan issued in June 2015. For calendar year 2015, 25 nations have pledged $416 million, of which about 85% had been received as of November 2015.

There is also a separate "Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan" (LOTFA), run by the U.N. Development Program (UNDP). It pays salaries of the ANP. The United States donates to that fund, for the purpose of paying ANP salaries and food costs. From 2002 to 2012, donors contributed $2.75 billion to the Fund, of which the United States contributed about $1 billion. Japan's 2009 pledge to pay the expenses of the Afghan police for at least six months (about $125 million for each six-month period) is implemented through the LOTFA. The EU pledged $175 million for the fund from January 2011 to March 2013. South Korea contributes about $100 million per year to the fund. The fund is in the process of transition from management by UNDP to the Afghan government.

Other Bilateral Donations. Other bilateral donations to the ANDSF, both in funds and in arms and equipment donations, include the "NATO Equipment Donation Program" through which donor countries supply the ANDSF with equipment. Since 2002, about $2.9 billion in assistance to the ANDSF has come from these sources. There is also a NATO-Russia Council Helicopter Maintenance Trust Fund. Launched in March 2011, this fund provides maintenance and repair capacity to the Afghan Air Force helicopter fleet, much of which is Russian-made.

The Afghan National Army (ANA)

The Afghan National Army has been built "from scratch" since 2002—it is not a direct continuation of the national army that existed from the 1880s until the Taliban era. That army disintegrated entirely during the 1992-1996 *mujahedin* civil war and the 1996-2001 Taliban period. Some officers who served prior to the Taliban have joined the ANA. The ANA is reportedly highly regarded by Afghans as a symbol of nationhood and factional nonalignment. The special operations component of the ANA, trained by U.S. Special Operations Forces, and numbering nearly 12,000, are considered well-trained.

There problem of absenteeism within the ANA is in n large part because soldiers do not serve in their provinces of residence. Many in the ANA take long trips to their home towns to remit funds to their families, and often then return to the ANA after a long absence. However, that problem has eased somewhat in recent years because almost all of the ANA is now paid electronically. The Successive foreign aid appropriation have required that ANA recruits be vetted for terrorism, human rights violations, and drug trafficking.

The United States and other donors have given the ANA primarily light weapons rather than large numbers of heavy arms such as tanks. The ANA operates a few hundred Russian-built T-55 and T-62 tanks left over from the Soviet occupation. The United States is also helping the ANDSF build up an indigenous weapons production capability. However, in line with U.S. efforts to cut costs for the ANDSF, the Defense Department shifted in 2013 from providing new equipment to maintaining existing equipment.

The United States has built five ANA bases: Herat (Corps 207), Gardez (Corps 203), Qandahar (Corps 205), Mazar-e-Sharif (Corps 209), and Kabul (Division HQ, Corps 201, Air Corps). Coalition officers conduct heavy weapons training for a heavy brigade as part of the "Kabul Corps," based in Pol-e-Charki, east of Kabul. U.S. funds were used to construct a new Defense Ministry headquarters in Kabul at a cost of about $92 million.

Afghan Air Force (AAF)

Equipment, maintenance, logistical difficulties, and defections continue to plague the Afghan Air Force. It remains mostly a support force but does conduct some armed aerial escort and overwatch missions. The force is a carryover from the Afghan Air Force that existed prior to the Soviet invasion, and is expanding gradually after its equipment was virtually eliminated in the 2001-2002 U.S. combat against the Taliban regime. It has about 7,000 personnel of a target size of about 8,000 by 2016. There are five female AAF personnel. During FY2010-FY2015, the United States obligated $2.5 billion for the AAF, including nearly $1 billion for equipment and aircraft.

The Afghan Air Force has about 90 aircraft including four C-130 transport planes and 49 Mi-17 (Russian-made) helicopters. The target size of its fleet is 140 total aircraft. Defense Department officials plans to buy the force another 56 Mi-17s are in various stages of implementation, but are to some extent held up over U.S.-Russian differences on various issues such as Ukraine and Syria.[59] The AAF also has begun taking delivery and utilizing some of the 20 A-29 aircraft that it has purchased, but the AAF will not be considered fully operational on the aircraft until 2017, according to DOD. The relative lack of ability by the AAF to provide significant tactical combat air support might have contributed to the U.S. decision, discussed above, to continue to provide air support beyond 2014. The FY2016 Consolidated Appropriation (P.L. 114-113) prohibits U.S. funding of any additional C-130s (acquisition of four more is planned by the AAF) until DOD provides a report on Afghanistan's airlift requirements.

Among other U.S.-funded purchases, the AAF plans to acquire 20 Super Tucano turboprop aircraft. U.S. plans do not include supply of fixed-wing combat aircraft such as F-16s, which Afghanistan wants to acquire eventually, according to U.S. military officials. There is a concern that Afghanistan will not soon be able to sustain operations of an aircraft of that sophistication.

Afghanistan also is seeking the return of 26 aircraft, including some MiG-2s that were flown to safety in Pakistan and Uzbekistan during the past conflicts in Afghanistan. In 2010, Russia and Germany supplied MI-8 helicopters to the Afghan Air Force.

Afghan National Police (ANP)

U.S. and Afghan officials believe that a credible and capable national police force is at least as important to combating the insurgency as the ANA. DOD reports on Afghanistan assess that there have been "significant strides [that] have been made in professionalizing the ANP." However, many outside assessments of the ANP are negative, asserting that there is rampant corruption to the point where citizens mistrust and fear the ANP. DOD reports acknowledge that the force has a far higher desertion rate than does the ANA; substantial illiteracy; involvement in local factional or ethnic disputes because the ANP works in the communities its personnel come from; and widespread use of drugs. About 2,000 ANP are women, and in January 2014—for the first time—a woman was appointed as a district police commander.

The United States and Afghanistan have worked to correct long-standing deficiencies. Some U.S. commanders credit a November 2009 doubling of police salaries (to $240 per month for service in high combat areas), and the streamlining and improvement of the payments system for the ANP, with reducing the solicitation of bribes by the ANP. The raise also stimulated an eightfold increase in recruitment. Others note the success, thus far, of efforts to pay police directly (and

[59] Politico. November 18, 2013.

avoid skimming by commanders) through cell phone-based banking relationships (E-Paisa, run by Roshan cell network).

The ANP is increasingly being provided with heavy weapons and now have about 5,000 armored vehicles countrywide. Still, most police units lack adequate ammunition and vehicles. In some cases, equipment requisitioned by their commanders was sold and the funds pocketed by the police officers.

The target size of the ANP, including all forces under the ANP umbrella, is 157,000 personnel. The force has about 146,000 personnel, about 93% of its target size.

One component of the ANP is the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP). The force, which numbers over 15,000 (close to its target level of 16,000), has been used to clear areas during counterinsurgency operations. The ANCOP force is considered effective because it deploys nationally and is less susceptible to local power brokers than are other ANP units.

The Afghan Border Police (ABP) mission is to secure national borders and secure Afghanistan's airports. It has nearly its target strength of 22,000 personnel.

Training Issues. The U.S. police training effort was first led by State Department/Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), but DOD took over the lead role in April 2005. A number of early support programs, such as the auxiliary police program attempted during 2005, were discarded as ineffective. It was replaced during 2007-2011 with the "*focused district development*" program in which a district police force was taken out and retrained, its duties temporarily performed by more highly trained ANCOP. Police training includes instruction in human rights principles and democratic policing concepts, and State Department human rights reports on Afghanistan say that the Afghan government and observers are increasingly monitoring the police force to prevent abuses.

Supplements to the National Police: Afghan Local Police (ALP) and Others

In 2008, the failure of several police training efforts led to a decision to develop local forces to protect their communities. Until then, U.S. military commanders opposed assisting local militias anywhere in Afghanistan for fear of recreating militias that commit abuses and administer arbitrary justice. However, the urgent security needs in Afghanistan caused U.S. and NATO commanders to expand local security experiments, based on successful experiences in Iraq and after designing mechanisms to place them firmly under Afghan government (mainly Ministry of Interior) control. Among these forces (which are in addition to the 157,000 target level ANP forces above) are the following:

- *Afghan Local Police (ALP)*. The ALP concept grew out of earlier programs. In 2008, the "Afghan Provincial Protection Program," funded with DOD (CERP) monies, was implemented in Wardak Province (Jalrez district) in early 2009 with 100 recruits, and was eventually expanded to 1,200 personnel. U.S. commanders said no U.S. weapons were supplied to the militias, but the Afghan government provided weapons (Kalashnikov rifles) to the recruits, possibly using U.S. funds. Participants were given $200 per month. In February 2010, a similar effort called Village Stability Operations (VSO) began in Arghandab district of Qandahar Province when U.S. Special Operations Forces organized about 25 villagers into an armed neighborhood watch group. The program was expanded into a joint Afghan-U.S. Special Operations effort to help improve governance, security, and development. These programs were transformed by 2012 into the Afghan Local Police (ALP) program in which the U.S. Special Operations Forces set up and

trained local security organs of about 300 members each, under the control of district police chiefs. Each fighter is vetted by a local shura as well as Afghan intelligence. The latest DOD report says there are about 28,000 ALP operating nationwide—close to the 30,000 target size for the program. The ALP has the authority to detain criminals or insurgents temporarily, and transfer them to the ANP or ANA. Possibly abusing that authority, the ALP has been cited by Human Rights Watch and other human rights groups for killings, rapes, arbitrary detentions, land grabs, and sexual abuse of young boys by ALP commanders. Some of the findings have been substantiated by a U.S. military investigation.[60]

- *Afghan Public Protection Force*. This force, operating as a state-owned enterprise under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior, guards sites and convoys. It was formed to implement Karzai's August 17, 2010, decree (No. 62) that private security contractor forces be disbanded and their functions performed by official Afghan government forces by March 20, 2012. The unit, which bills customers for contracted work, numbers about 22,000, but there is no formal target size.

The local security forces above resemble but are not traditional local security structures called *arbokai.* Arbokais are private tribal militias. Some believe that the *arbokai* concept should be revived as a means of securing Afghanistan, as the *arbokai* did during the reign of Zahir Shah and in prior pre-Communist eras. Reports persist that some tribal groupings have formed *arbokai* without specific authorization.

Earlier Efforts to Disband Local Militias. The programs discussed above somewhat reverse the 2002-2007 efforts to disarm local sources of armed force. And, as noted in several DOD reports on Afghan stability, there have sometimes been clashes and disputes between the local security units and the ANDSF units, particularly in cases where the units are of different ethnicities. These are the types of difficulties that prompted earlier efforts to disarm local militia forces, as discussed below. The main program, run by UNAMA, was called the "DDR" program—Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration—and it formally concluded on June 30, 2006. The program got off to a slow start because the Afghan Defense Ministry did not reduce the percentage of Tajiks in senior positions by a July 1, 2003, target date, dampening Pashtun recruitment. In September 2003, Karzai replaced 22 senior Tajiks in the Defense Ministry officials with Pashtuns, Uzbeks, and Hazaras, enabling DDR to proceed. The major donor for the program was Japan, which contributed about $140 million.

The DDR program was initially expected to demobilize 100,000 fighters, although that figure was later reduced. Of those demobilized, 55,800 former fighters exercised reintegration options provided by the program: starting small businesses, farming, and other options. Some studies criticized the DDR program for failing to prevent a certain amount of rearmament of militiamen or stockpiling of weapons and for the rehiring of some militiamen.[61] Part of the DDR program was the collection and cantonment of militia weapons, but generally only poor-quality weapons were collected.

After June 2005, the disarmament effort emphasized another program called "DIAG"—Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG), run by the Afghan Disarmament and Reintegration Commission, headed by then Vice President Khalili. The effort was intended to

[60] Ernesto Londono. "U.S. Cites Local Afghan Police Abuses." *Washington Post*, December 16, 2011. The Human Rights Watch report is entitled "Just Don't Call It a Militia." http://www.hrw.org, September 12, 2011.

[61] For an analysis of the DDR program, see Christian Dennys. *Disarmament, Demobilization and Rearmament?*, June 6, 2005, http://www.jca.apc.org/~jann/Documents/Disarmament%20demobilization%20rearmament.pdf.

disarm as many as 150,000 members of 1,800 different "illegal armed groups"—militiamen that were not part of recognized local forces (Afghan Military Forces, AMF) and were never on the rolls of the Defense Ministry. Under the DIAG, no payments were made to fighters, and the program depended on persuasion rather than use of force against the illegal groups. DIAG was not as well funded as was DDR, receiving $11 million in operating funds. As an incentive, Japan and other donors offered $35 million for development projects where illegal groups have disbanded. The goals of DIAG were not met in part because armed groups in the south said they need to remain armed against the Taliban.

Rule of Law/Criminal Justice Sector

Many experts believe that an effective justice sector is vital to Afghan governance. Some of the criticisms and allegations of corruption at all levels of the Afghan bureaucracy have been discussed throughout this report. U.S. justice sector programs generally focus on promoting rule of law and building capacity of the judicial system, including police training and court construction. The FY2016 consolidated appropriation (P.L. 114-113) requires that at least $50 million in Economic Support Funds or International Narcotics and Law Enforcement funding be used for rule of law programs in Afghanistan in FY2016. The rule of law issue is covered in CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman, and CRS Report R41484, *Afghanistan: U.S. Rule of Law and Justice Sector Assistance*, by Liana W. Rosen and Kenneth Katzman.

Policy Component: Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)

U.S. and partner officials praised the effectiveness of "Provincial Reconstruction Teams" (PRTs)—enclaves of U.S. or partner forces and civilian officials that provide safe havens for international aid workers to help with reconstruction and to extend the writ of the Kabul government. The PRTs, the concept for which was announced in December 2002, performed activities ranging from resolving local disputes to coordinating local reconstruction projects, although most PRTs in combat-heavy areas focused on counterinsurgency. Many of the additional U.S. civilian officials deployed to Afghanistan during 2009 and 2010 were based at PRTs. Some aid agencies say they felt secure when working with the PRTs,[62] but several relief groups did not want to associate with military forces because doing so might taint their perceived neutrality.

During his presidency, Karzai consistently criticized the PRTs as holding back Afghan capacity-building and repeatedly called them "parallel governing structures." USAID observers backed some of the criticism, saying that there was little Afghan input into PRT development project decisionmaking. To address this criticism, during 2008-2012 some donor countries, including the United States, enhanced the civilian diplomatic and development component of the PRTs to try to change their image from military institutions. Each U.S.-run PRT had U.S. forces to train Afghan security forces; DOD civil affairs officers; representatives of USAID to administer PRT development projects; State Department, and other agencies; and Afghan government (Interior Ministry) personnel. USAID spending on PRT projects is in the table at the end of this report.

Virtually all the PRTs, listed in **Table 14**, were placed under the ISAF mission. In line with a decision announced at the May 20-21, 2012, NATO summit in Chicago, all of the PRTs were transferred to Afghan control by the end of 2014. Related U.S.-led structures such as District Support Teams (DSTs), which help district officials provide government services, also closed.

[62] Kraul, Chris. "U.S. Aid Effort Wins Over Skeptics in Afghanistan." *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2003.

Reintegration and Potential Reconciliation with Insurgents[63]

President Ghani has prioritized forging a reconciliation agreement with the insurgency, despite skepticism from many Afghan figures over the Taliban's intentions as well as those of Pakistan. A settlement will undoubtedly require compromises that could adversely affect the human rights situation—most insurgents are highly conservative Islamists who seek strict limitations on women's rights. A political settlement could involve Taliban figures' obtaining ministerial posts, seats in parliament, or control over territory. The Obama Administration initially withheld endorsement of the concept over similar concerns, but eventually backed it under the stipulation that any settlement require insurgent leaders, as an outcome,[64] to (1) cease fighting, (2) accept the Afghan constitution, and (3) sever any ties to Al Qaeda or other terrorist groups.

On September 5, 2010, an "Afghan High Peace Council" (HPC) was formed to oversee the settlement process. Former President/Northern Alliance political leader Burhanuddin Rabbani was appointed by Karzai to head it, largely to gain Tajik and other Northern Alliance support for the concept. On September 20, 2011, Rabbani was assassinated by a Taliban infiltrator posing as an intermediary; on April 14, 2012, the HPC voted his son, Salahuddin, as his replacement. Rabbani is now also Foreign Minister.

Ghani is a Pashtun from the east of the country—the geographic region where most Taliban leaders hail from—and many experts assert that the Taliban is more amenable to talking with his government than it was with that of Karzai, who is a southern Pashtun. Ghani's trips to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and China have focused on building support among these regional powers for renewed talks; these countries are perceived as holding some leverage over the Taliban movement (or, in the case of China, over Pakistan). Ghani reportedly seeks to take advantage of apparent growing Pakistani support for Afghan reconciliation.

Prior to the acknowledgement of Mullah Umar's death, there were some indications of positive movement on the issue. In December 2014, Taliban figures reportedly traveled from their base in Qatar to China as part of an effort by China to promote reconciliation. In May 2015, the Pugwash International Conference on Science and World Affairs convened talks in Qatar between Taliban representatives and Afghan officials, acting in their personal capacities. The meetings reportedly resulted in agreement for the Taliban to reopen its office in Qatar, to serve as a location for further talks, and for possible amendments to the Afghan constitution should a settlement be reached—a concept previously rejected by the Afghan government. Later in the month, a member of the High Peace Council Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai met in western China with three figures who had served in the Taliban regime—a meeting convened by China reportedly with assistance from Pakistan.[65] On July 7, 2015, the first acknowledged government-Taliban meeting took place between leaders of the High Peace Council and Taliban figures in Muree, Pakistan. However, a follow-up meeting planned for August 2015 was cancelled when the Taliban succession process touched off dissension within the movement. In December 2015, Ghani received a warm reception in Islamabad to attend a Heart of Asia process (see below) regional meeting, and during that visit Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States agreed that settlement talks should resume. In late 2015, the United States, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China formed a working group to try to restart government-Taliban negotiations; the four have held several meetings that ended with

[63] This issue is discussed in substantial detail in CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman.

[64] The concept that this stipulation could be an "outcome" of negotiations was advanced by Secretary of State Clinton at the first annual Richard C. Holbrooke Memorial Address. February 18, 2011.

[65] "Taliban Representatives Meet with Afghan Envoy in China." *New York Times*, May 26, 2015.

pledges to continue efforts toward that end. Pugwash also has held at least one additional informal meeting between the opposing sides. However, in March 2016, the Taliban announced it would not restart talks. Its recent battlefield gains might have strengthened the assertions of hardliners that there is no need to negotiate a settlement.[66]

The reconciliation meetings that were held represented incremental progress from past efforts. In 2011, U.S. diplomats held a series of meetings with Tayeb Agha, an aide to Mullah Umar, to pursue confidence-building measures with the Taliban. The U.S.-Taliban meetings were based, in large part, on proposals for the United States to transfer five senior Taliban captives from the Guantanamo detention facility to a form of house arrest in Qatar; and the Taliban would release the one U.S. prisoner of war it held, Bowe Bergdahl. The talks broke off in March 2012 but were resurrected in 2013, and, in June 2013, the Taliban opened a representative office in Qatar and issued a statement refusing future ties to international terrorist groups. However, the Taliban violated understandings with the United States and Qatar by raising a flag of the former Taliban regime and calling the facility the office of the "Islamic Emirate" of Afghanistan—the name the Taliban regime gave for Afghanistan during its rule. These actions prompted U.S. officials, through Qatar, to compel the Taliban to close the office. However, the Taliban officials remained in Qatar, and indirect U.S.-Taliban talks through Qatari mediation revived in mid-2014. These indirect talks led to the May 31, 2014, exchange of Bergdahl for the release to Qatar of the five Taliban figures, with the stipulation that they cannot travel outside Qatar for at least one year. The five released, and their positions during the Taliban's period of rule, were Mullah Mohammad Fazl, the chief of staff of the Taliban's military; Noorullah Noori, the Taliban commander in northern Afghanistan; Khairullah Khairkhwa, the Taliban regime Interior Minister; Mohammad Nabi Omari, a Taliban official; and Abdul Haq Wasiq, the Taliban regime's deputy intelligence chief. The one-year travel ban expired on June 1, 2015, but Qatar extended the ban until there is an agreed solution that would ensure the five do not rejoin the Taliban insurgency.

In June 2012, Afghan government officials and Taliban representatives held talks at two meetings—one in Paris, and one an academic conference in Kyoto, Japan. Meetings between senior Taliban figures and members of the Northern Alliance faction were held in France (December 20-21, 2012) and reportedly included submission by the Taliban of a political platform that signaled acceptance of some aspects of human rights and women's rights provisions of the current constitution.[67] Earlier talks among then-president Karzai's brother, Qayyum; Arsala Rahmani, a former Taliban official who reconciled and entered the Afghan parliament but was assassinated in May 2012; and the former Taliban Ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef, took place in Saudi Arabia and UAE. Some Taliban sympathizers reportedly attended the June 2-4, 2010, consultative peace *jirga.*

Removing Taliban Figures From U.N. Sanctions Lists. A key Taliban demand in negotiations is the removal of the names of some Taliban figures from U.N. lists of terrorists. These lists were established pursuant to Resolution 1267 and Resolution 1333 (October 15, 1999, and December 19, 2000, both pre-September 11 sanctions against the Taliban and Al Qaeda) and Resolution 1390 (January 16, 2002). The Afghan government has submitted a list of 50 Taliban figures it wants taken off the list, which includes about 140 Taliban-related persons or entities. On January 26, 2010, Russia, previously a hold-out against such a process, dropped opposition to removing five Taliban-era figures from these sanctions lists, paving the way for their de-listing: those

[66] Mujib Mashal and Rod Nordland. "Afghanistan and Pakistan Agree to Taliban Talks." *New York Times*, December 11, 2015.

[67] Author conversations with Afghan officials and U.S. experts. 2012-13.

removed included Taliban-era foreign minister Wakil Mutawwakil and representative to the United States Abdul Hakim Mujahid. Mujahid is now on the HPC.

On June 17, 2011, in concert with U.S. confirmations of talks with Taliban figures, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1988 and 1989. The resolutions drew a separation between the Taliban and Al Qaeda with regard to the sanctions. However, a decision on whether to remove the 50 Taliban figures from the list, as suggested by Afghanistan, was deferred. On July 21, 2011, 14 Taliban figures were removed from the "1267" sanctions list; among them were four members of the High Peace Council (including Arsala Rahmani, mentioned above).

Reintegratio/Countering Violent Extremism

A related concept is referred to as reintegration—an effort to induce insurgent fighters to surrender and reenter their communities. A specific Afghan reintegration plan was drafted by the Afghan government and adopted by a "peace *loya jirga*" during June 2-4, 2010,[68] providing for surrendering fighters to receive jobs, amnesty, protection, and an opportunity to be part of the security architecture for their communities. Later in June 2010, President Karzai issued a decree to implement the plan, which includes efforts by Afghan local leaders to convince insurgents to reintegrate. UNAMA said on December 6, 2013, that local civil society-sponsored meetings called the "Afghan People's Dialogue on Peace," intended to promote peace and reconciliation, were expanding.

The reintegration effort received formal international backing at the July 20, 2010, Kabul Conference. About 11,000 fighters were reintegrated since the program began in 2010. A majority of those reintegrated are from the north and west. Some observers say there have been cases in which reintegrated fighters have committed human rights abuses against women and others, suggesting that the reintegration process might have unintended consequences.

Britain, Japan, and several other countries, including the United States, have donated about $200 million, of which the U.S. contribution has been about half the total (CERP funds).[69] Overall funding shortfalls slowed the program in 2014 and, during the Ghani and Abdullah visit in March 2015, the United States announced an additional $10 million to support the reintegration program. However, funding largely stopped in early 2016 and payments to reintegrated fighters were halted as donors reassessed the value of the program.[70] Funding for the High Peace Council continues. And, the United States is spending about $33 million in FY2016 on programs to counter violent extremism, including cultural, entertainment, and educational efforts.[71]

Previous efforts had marginal success. A "Program for Strengthening Peace and Reconciliation" (referred to in Afghanistan by its Pashto acronym "PTS") operated during 2003-2008, headed by then-*Meshrano Jirga* speaker Sibghatullah Mojadeddi and then-Vice President Karim Khalili, and overseen by Karzai's National Security Council. The program persuaded 9,000 Taliban figures and commanders to renounce violence and join the political process, but made little impact on the tenacity or strength of the insurgency.

[68] Afghanistan National Security Council. "Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program." April 2010.

[69] The National Defense Authorization Act for FY2010 (P.L. 111-84) authorized the use of CERP funds to win local support, to "reintegrate" Taliban fighters.

[70] Tim Craig and Mohammad Sharif. "U.S.-Afghan Plan to Buy Peace Might be Failing." Washington Post, May 18, 2016.

[71] Ibid.

Table 5. Major Security-Related Indicators

Force	Current Level
Total Foreign Forces in Afghanistan	About 16,000: 9,800 U.S. and 6,400 partner forces in Resolute Support Mission (down from peak of 140,000 international forces in 2011). U.S. total was 25,000 in 2005; 16,000 in 2003; 5,000 in 2002.
U.S. Casualties in Afghanistan	2,215 killed, of which about 1,832 were by hostile action (plus 2 DOD civilians killed by hostile action). Additional 11 U.S. military deaths by hostile action in other OEF theaters. 150 U.S. killed from October 2001-January 2003. 500+ killed in 2010. U.S. casualties have dropped dramatically since mid-2013 when Afghan forces assumed lead security role.
Afghan National Army (ANA)	About 175,000, relatively close to the 195,000 target size that was planned by November 2012.
Afghan National Police (ANP)	About 146,000, near the target size of 157,000.
Afghan Local Police	About 28,300, close to the target size of 30,000.
ANDSF Salaries	About $1.6 billion per year, paid by donor countries bilaterally or via trust funds
Al Qaeda in Afghanistan	Between 100-300 members in Afghanistan, according to U.S. commanders in April 2016. Also, small numbers of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and other Al Qaeda affiliates.
Number of Taliban fighters	Up to 25,000, including about 3,000 Haqqani network and 1,000 HIG.
Number of Islamic State-affiliated forces	Estimated 1,000-3,000, with U.S. commanders guiding to the "low end" of the range in April 2016. Some IMU and Pakistan Taliban involved, joining disaffected Afghan Taliban.
Afghan casualties	See CRS Report R41084, *Afghanistan Casualties: Military Forces and Civilians*, by Susan G. Chesser.

Sources: CRS; testimony and public statements by DOD officials; *New York Times*, December 19, 2015.

Regional Dimension

The Obama Administration has encouraged Afghanistan's neighbors to support a stable and economically viable Afghanistan and to include Afghanistan in regional security and economic organizations and patterns. The Administration first obtained formal pledges from Afghanistan's neighbors to noninterference in Afghanistan at an international meeting on Afghanistan in Istanbul on November 2, 2011 ("Istanbul Declaration"), and again at the December 5, 2011, Bonn Conference on Afghanistan (the 10th anniversary of the Bonn Conference that formed the post-Taliban government). As a follow-up to the Istanbul Declaration, confidence-building measures to be taken by Afghanistan's neighbors were discussed at a Kabul ministerial conference on June 14, 2012. At that meeting, also known as the "Heart of Asia" ministerial conference, Afghanistan hosted 14 other countries from the region, as well as 14 supporting countries and 11 regional and international organizations. The assembled nations and organizations agreed to jointly fight terrorism and drug trafficking, and pursue economic development.[72] Heart of Asia meetings have continued periodically since, including one that coincided with a visit by President Ghani to China in October 2014. The latest was held in Islamabad in December 2015.

Afghanistan has integrated into regional security and economic organizations. In November 2005, Afghanistan joined the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and, in June

[72] Participating were Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, UAE, and Uzbekistan.

2012, Afghanistan was granted full observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a security coordination body that includes Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. U.S. officials have also sought to enlist both regional and greater international support for Afghanistan through the still-expanding 50-nation "International Contact Group." Another effort, the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference (RECCA) on Afghanistan, was launched in 2005. Turkey and UNAMA co-chair a "Regional Working Group" initiative, which organized the November 2, 2011, Istanbul meeting mentioned above. UNAMA also leads a "Kabul Silk Road" initiative to promote regional cooperation on Afghanistan.

In addition, several regional meetings series have been established between the leaders of Afghanistan and neighboring countries. These series include summit meetings between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey; and between Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. However, this latter forum ended in mid-2012 after Afghanistan signed the SPA with the United States, which Iran strongly opposed. Russia has assembled several "quadrilateral summits" among it, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, to focus on counternarcotics and anti-smuggling.

Economically, the Administration is emphasizing development of a Central Asia-South Asia trading hub—part of a "New Silk Road" (NSR)—in an effort to keep Afghanistan stable and economically vibrant as donors wind down their involvement. The FY2014 omnibus appropriation, (P.L. 113-76), provided up to $150 million to promote Afghanistan's links within its region. The FY2016 Consolidated Appropriation (P.L. 114-113) contains a provision that an unspecified amount of Economic Support Funds (ESF) appropriated for Afghanistan be used "for programs in South and Central Asia to expand linkages between Afghanistan and countries in the region."

Table 6. Afghan and Regional Facilities Used for Operations in and Supply Lines to Afghanistan

Facility	Use
Bagram Air Base	50 miles north of Kabul, the operational hub of U.S. and NATO forces and aircraft in Afghanistan. Hospital constructed, one of the first permanent structures there.
Qandahar Air Field	The hub of military operations in the south, and still in use by U.S. forces at least through 2015.
Shindand Air Base	In Farah province, about 20 miles from Iran border. Used by U.S. and partner forces and combat aircraft since October 2004, after the dismissal of Herat governor Ismail Khan, who controlled it.
Peter Ganci Base: Manas, Kyrgyzstan	Was used by 1,200 U.S. military personnel as well as refueling and cargo aircraft for shipments to and from Afghanistan. Kyrgyz governments on several occasions demanded the United States vacate the base but subsequently agreed to allow continued use in exchange for large increase in U.S. payments for its use. Kyrgyz parliament voted in June 2013 not to extend the U.S. lease beyond 2014. U.S. forces ceased using and formally handed over the facility to Kyrgyz officials on June 4, 2014.
Incirlik Air Base, Turkey	About 2,000 U.S. military personnel there; U.S. aircraft supply U.S. forces in Afghanistan.
Al Dhafra, UAE	Air base used by about 2,000 U.S. military personnel conducting operations in Afghanistan and against the Islamic State.
Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar	Largest air facility used by U.S. in region. Houses central air operations coordination center for U.S. missions in Afghanistan and against the Islamic State. Facility also houses CENTCOM forward headquarters.
Naval Support Facility, Bahrain	U.S. naval command headquarters for regional anti-smuggling, anti-terrorism, and anti-proliferation naval search missions. About 5,000 U.S. military personnel there.
Uzbekistan	Karsi-Khanabad Air Base not used by U.S. after September 2005, following U.S.-Uzbek dispute over May 2005 Uzbek crackdown on unrest in Andijon. Some U.S. shipments through Uzbekistan began in February 2009 through Navoi airfield in central Uzbekistan.
Tajikistan	Some use of air bases and other facilities by coalition partners, and emergency use by U.S permitted. India also uses Tajikistan air bases under separate agreement.
Pakistan	The main U.S. supply route to Afghanistan.
Russia	Allowed nonlethal equipment bound for Afghanistan to transit Russia by rail as of 2006, as part of "Northern Distribution Network," which received increased use after 2011.

Pakistan

The Afghanistan neighbor that is considered most crucial to Afghanistan's security is Pakistan. Experts and officials of many countries debate whether Pakistan is committed to Afghan stability or to exerting control of Afghanistan through ties to insurgent groups. DOD reports on Afghanistan's stability repeatedly have identified Afghan militant safe haven in Pakistan as a threat to Afghan stability, and some recent DOD reports have stated that Pakistan uses proxy forces in Afghanistan to counter Indian influence there. Some argue that Pakistan sees Afghanistan as potentially providing it with strategic depth against India. However, Pakistan's leaders appear to increasingly believe that instability in Afghanistan will rebound to Pakistan's detriment and are actively promoting a political settlement within Afghanistan. Ghani has visited Pakistan and hosted visiting Pakistani officials several times as President, and has engaged Pakistan's powerful Army command as well. Pakistan has begun training small numbers of ANDSF officers in Pakistan and, in May 2015, a demonstration of improving cooperation came in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding for Afghanistan's NDS intelligence service to be

trained by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), its key intelligence arm. That agreement came despite Pakistan's complaints that militants expelled by the Pakistani military are being given safe haven in Afghanistan. As noted above, Pakistan's government warmly welcomed Ghani to Islamabad to attend a meeting of the Heart of Asia regional process in December 2015.

Pakistan appears to anticipate that improved relations with Afghanistan's leadership will also limit India's influence in Afghanistan. Pakistan has long asserted that India is using its Embassy and four consulates in Afghanistan (Pakistan says India has nine consulates) to recruit anti-Pakistan insurgents, and that India is using its aid programs only to build influence there. At a February 2013 meeting in Britain, Pakistan demanded that Afghanistan scale back relations with India and sign a strategic agreement with Pakistan that includes Pakistani training for the ANDSF. Pakistan's Defense Secretary stated in January 2014 that Pakistan would not accept a robust role for India in Afghanistan as international forces wind down involvement in Afghanistan.

Many Afghans had viewed positively Pakistan's role as the hub for U.S. backing of the *mujahedin* that forced the Soviet withdrawal in 1988-1989, but later came to resent Pakistan as one of only three countries to formally recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government (Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are the others). Relations improved after military leader President Pervez Musharraf left office in 2008 and was replaced by the civilian President Asif Zardari. However, the September 2011 insurgent attacks on the U.S. Embassy and killing of former President Rabbani caused then president Karzai to move strategically closer to India. In May 2013, Afghan and Pakistani border forces clashed, killing some from each side.

International Border Question. There are no indications the two countries are close to settling the long-standing issue of their border. Pakistan has long sought that Afghanistan formally recognize as the border the "Durand Line," a border agreement reached between Britain (signed by Sir Henry Mortimer Durand) and then-Afghan leader Amir Abdul Rahman Khan in 1893, separating Afghanistan from what was then British-controlled India (later Pakistan after the 1947 partition). The border is recognized by the United Nations, but Afghanistan continues to indicate that the border was drawn unfairly to separate Pashtun tribes and should be renegotiated. Afghan leaders criticized October 21, 2012, comments by then-SRAP Grossman that U.S. "policy is that border is the international border," even though it reflected a long-standing U.S. position. As of October 2002, about 1.75 million Afghan refugees have returned from Pakistan since the Taliban fell, but as many as 3 million might still remain in Pakistan. Tensions erupted in December 2014, just weeks after the Ghani visit to Islamabad over border trenches dug by Pakistan's military.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA). U.S. efforts to persuade Pakistan to forge a "transit trade" agreement with Afghanistan bore success with the signature of a trade agreement between the two on July 18, 2010. The agreement allows for easier exportation via Pakistan of Afghan products, which are mostly agricultural products that depend on rapid transit and are key to Afghanistan's economy. On June 12, 2011, in the context of a Karzai visit to Islamabad, both countries began full implementation of the agreement. It is expected to greatly expand the $2 billion in trade per year the two countries were doing prior to the agreement. The agreement represented a success for the Canada-sponsored "Dubai Process" of talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan on modernizing border crossings, new roads, and a comprehensive border management strategy to meet IMF benchmarks. A drawback to the agreement is that Afghan trucks, under the agreement, are not permitted to take back cargo from India after dropping off goods there. The Afghanistan-Pakistan trade agreement followed agreements to send

more Afghan graduate students to study in Pakistan, and a June 2010 agreement to send small numbers of ANA officers to train in Pakistan.[73]

U.S.-Pakistan Cooperation on Afghanistan

In the several years after the September 11, 2001, attacks, Pakistani cooperation against Al Qaeda was considered by U.S. officials to be relatively effective. Pakistan arrested over 700 Al Qaeda figures after the September 11 attacks[74] and allowed U.S. access to Pakistani airspace, some ports, and some airfields for the major combat phase of OEF. In April 2008, in an extension of the work of the Tripartite Commission (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and ISAF, in which military leaders of these entities meet on both sides of the border), the three countries agreed to set up five "border coordination centers" (BCCs) that include radar nodes to give liaison officers a common view of the border area. Four were established, but all were on the Afghan side of the border and Pakistan did not fulfilled its May 2009 pledge to establish one on the Pakistani side of the border, causing the BCC process to wither. However, according to DOD, ANDSF and Pakistani officers have been meeting to try to revive the BCCs and there is an RSM Tripartite Joint Operations Center at which Afghan and Pakistan military liaison officers meet monthly.

The May 1, 2011, U.S. raid that killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan added to preexisting strains caused by Pakistan's refusal to crack down on the Haqqani network. Relations worsened further after a November 26, 2011, incident in which a U.S. airstrike killed 24 Pakistani soldiers, and Pakistan responded by closing border crossings, suspending participation in the border coordination centers, and boycotting the December 2011 Bonn Conference. U.S.-Pakistan cooperation on Afghanistan has since improved somewhat. However, Pakistan protested the U.S. strike on Mullah Mansour in May 2016, which struck his vehicle after it crossed into Pakistan from Iran, as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty.

Iran

Iran has long sought to deny the United States the use of Afghanistan as a base from which to pressure or attack Iran, to the point where Iran strenuously but unsuccessfully sought to scuttle the May 1, 2012, U.S.-Afghanistan SPA and the U.S.-Afghanistan BSA. As a longer-term objective, Iran seeks to exert its historic influence over western Afghanistan and to protect Afghanistan's Shiite and other Persian-speaking minorities. Still, most experts appear to see Iran as a relatively marginal player in Afghanistan compared to Pakistan, while others assert that Tehran is able to mobilize large numbers of Afghans in the west to support its policies.

The Obama Administration initially saw Iran as potentially helpful to its strategy for Afghanistan. Iran was invited to the U.N.-led meeting on Afghanistan at the Hague on March 31, 2009, at which Iran pledged cooperation on combating Afghan narcotics and in helping economic development in Afghanistan—both policies Iran is pursuing to a large degree. The United States supported Iran's attendance of the October 18, 2010, meeting of the International Contact Group on Afghanistan, held in Rome. The United States and Iran also took similar positions at a U.N. meeting in Geneva in February 2010 that discussed drug trafficking across the Afghan border. Iran did not attend the January 28, 2010, international meeting on Afghanistan in London, but it did attend the July 28, 2010, international meeting in Kabul (both discussed above). Iran also

[73] Partlow, Joshua. "Afghans Build Up Ties With Pakistan." *Washington Post*, July 21, 2010.

[74] Among those captured by Pakistan are top bin Laden aide Abu Zubaydah (captured April 2002); alleged September 11 plotter Ramzi bin Al Shibh (September 11, 2002); top Al Qaeda planner Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (March 2003); and a top planner, Abu Faraj al-Libbi (May 2005).

attended the region-led international meeting in Istanbul on November 2, 2011, the December 5, 2011, Bonn Conference, and the Tokyo donors' conference on July 8, 2012.

Bilateral Government-to-Government Relations

Iran has had some success in building ties to the Afghan government, despite that government's heavy reliance on U.S. support. Ghani has generally endorsed the approach of his predecessor on Iran, which was to call Iran a "friend" of Afghanistan and to assert that Afghanistan must not become an arena for the broader competition and disputes between the United States and Iran.[75] Ghani visited Tehran during April 19-20, 2015, and held meetings with President Rouhani and Supreme Leader Ali Khamene'i, yielding agreement to work jointly against the Islamic State organization, which Iran is helping combat in Iraq and, to a lesser extent, in Syria.

There has been a consistent pattern of high-level exchanges. In June 2011, Iran's then-Defense Minister, Ahmad Vahidi, visited Kabul to sign a bilateral border security agreement, and the two signed a Memorandum of Understanding on broader security and economic cooperation in August 2013. Karzai visited Tehran in December 2013 and the two countries signed a "strategic cooperation agreement." Most U.S. analysts have downplayed the pact as an effort by Afghanistan to assuage Iranian concerns about the likely long-term U.S. presence in Afghanistan. Earlier, in October 2010, then-President Karzai acknowledged accepting about $2 million per year in cash payments from Iran, but Iran reportedly ceased the payments after the Karzai government signed the SPA with the United States in May 2012.

At the public level, many Afghans say they appreciated Iran's opposition to the Taliban regime. Iran saw that regime as a threat to its interests in Afghanistan, especially after Taliban forces captured Herat in September 1995. Iran subsequently drew even closer to the Northern Alliance than previously, providing its groups with fuel, funds, and ammunition.[76] In September 1998, Iranian and Taliban forces nearly came into direct conflict when Iran discovered that nine of its diplomats were killed in the course of the Taliban's offensive in northern Afghanistan. Iran massed forces at the border and threatened military action, but the crisis cooled without a major clash, possibly out of fear that Pakistan would intervene on behalf of the Taliban. Iran offered search and rescue assistance in Afghanistan during the U.S.-led war to topple the Taliban, and it also allowed U.S. humanitarian aid to the Afghan people to transit Iran. Iran helped construct Afghanistan's first post-Taliban government, in cooperation with the United States—at the December 2001 "Bonn Conference." In February 2002, Iran expelled Karzai opponent Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, but it did not arrest him.

At other times, Afghanistan and Iran have had disputes over Iran's efforts to expel Afghan refugees. There are 1 million registered Afghan refugees in Iran, and about 1.4 million Afghan migrants (nonrefugees) living there. A crisis erupted in May 2007 when Iran expelled about 50,000 into Afghanistan. About 300,000 Afghan refugees have returned from Iran since the Taliban fell. Press reports in May 2014 said Iran might be recruiting Shiite Afghan refugees in Iran to go to Syria to fight on behalf of the Assad regime there.

[75] Comments by President Karzai at the Brookings Institution. May 5, 2009.

[76] Steele, Jonathon. "America Includes Iran in Talks on Ending War in Afghanistan." *Washington Times*, December 15, 1997.

Iranian Assistance to Afghan Militants and to Pro-Iranian Groups and Regions

Despite its relations with the Afghan government, Iran, perhaps attempting to demonstrate that it can cause U.S. combat deaths in Afghanistan, has armed some militants there.[77] Recent State Department reports on international terrorism have stated that the Qods Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran (IRGC-QF) provides training to the Taliban on small unit tactics, small arms, explosives, and indirect weapons fire, and that it has shipped arms to militants in Qandahar. This phrasing implies that Iran is arming Pashtun Taliban militants in the core of the combat zone in Afghanistan. Weapons provided reportedly include mortars, 107mm rockets, rocket-propelled grenades, and plastic explosives. In March 2011, NATO said it had seized 48 Iranian-made rockets in Nimruz Province, bound for Afghan militants; the 122mm rockets have a range (13 miles) greater than those previously provided by Iran. On August 3, 2010, the Treasury Department, acting under Executive Order 13224, named two IRGC-QF officers as terrorism supporting entities, freezing any U.S.-based assets.[78]

Iran reportedly has allowed a Taliban office to open in Iran, and high-level Taliban figures have visited Iran.[79] While some see the contacts as Iranian support of the insurgency, others see it as an effort to exert some influence over reconciliation efforts. Iran previously allowed Taliban figures to attend conferences in Iran attended by Afghan figures, including late High Peace Council head Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Assistance to Ethnic and Religious Factions in Afghanistan

Others are puzzled by Iran's support of Taliban fighters who are Pashtun, because Iran has traditionally supported Persian-speaking or Shiite factions in Afghanistan, many of whom have been oppressed by the Pashtuns. Some of Iran's funding has been intended to support pro-Iranian groups in the west as well as Hazara Shiites in Kabul and in the Hazara heartland of Bamiyan, Ghazni, and Dai Kundi, in part by providing scholarships and funding for technical institutes. Iran has used some of its funds to construct mosques in Herat, pro-Iranian theological seminaries in Shiite districts of Kabul, and Shiite institutions in Hazara-dominated areas. Iran also offers scholarships to Afghans to study in Iranian universities, and there are consistent allegations that Iran has funded Afghan provincial council and parliamentary candidates who are perceived as pro-Tehran.[80] These efforts have helped Iran retain close ties with Afghanistan's leading Shiite cleric, Ayatollah Mohammad Mohseni, as well as Hazara political leader Mohammad Mohaqiq.

Iran's Development Aid for Afghanistan

Iran's economic aid to Afghanistan does not conflict with U.S. efforts to develop Afghanistan. Iran has pledged about $1 billion in aid to Afghanistan, of which about $500 million has been provided to date. The funds have been used mostly to build roads and bridges in western Afghanistan. In cooperation with India, Iran has been building roads that would connect western Afghanistan to Iran's port of Chahbahar, and provide Afghan and other goods an easier outlet to the Persian Gulf. In late July 2013, Iran and Afghanistan signed a formal agreement allowing

[77] Rashid, Ahmed. "Afghan Neighbors Show Signs of Aiding in Nation's Stability." *Wall Street Journal*, October 18, 2004.

[78] The Treasury Department. Fact Sheet: U.S. Treasury Department Targets Iran's Support for Terrorism. August 3, 2010.

[79] Maria Abi-Habib. "Iranians Build Up Afghan Clout. Wall Street Journal, October 26, 2012; Afghan Taliban Reportedly Sends Delegation to Iran for Talks. CBSnews.com, June 3, 2013.

[80] King, Laura. "In Western Afghan City, Iran Makes Itself Felt." *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 2010.

Afghanistan to use the port. Iran also has provided credits to the Afghan private sector and helped develop power transmission lines in the provinces bordering Iran, two of which were turned over to Afghan ownership in January 2013. Some of the funds reportedly are funneled through the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, which provides charity worldwide. Iran also provides gasoline and other fuels to Afghanistan.

India

India's goals in Afghanistan appear to be, at least in part, to prevent militants in Afghanistan from attacking Indian targets in Afghanistan and deny Pakistan the ability to block India from trade and other connections to Central Asia and beyond. India saw the Afghan Taliban's hosting of Al Qaeda during 1996-2001 as a major threat because of and to Al Qaeda's association with radical Islamic organizations in Pakistan that seek to end India's control of part of the disputed territories of Jammu and Kashmir. Some of these groups have committed major acts of terrorism in India, including the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008 and in July 2011.

Afghanistan has sought close ties to India—in large part to access India's large and rapidly growing economy—but without alarming Pakistan. In May 2011, India and Afghanistan announced a "Strategic Partnership" agreement that demonstrated India's support for U.S. efforts to better integrate Afghanistan into regional political, economic, and security structures. On October 5, 2011, Karzai signed the pact in New Delhi; it affirmed Pakistani fears by giving India, for the first time, a formal role in Afghan security. No Indian troops or security forces deployed to Afghanistan as a consequence, consistent with India's insistence that it not bear part of the burden of securing Afghanistan—but the two sides agreed for India to train ANDSF personnel (600 yearly) at India's Army's jungle warfare school.

In the immediate aftermath of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border clashes in May 2013, Karzai visited India to seek sales of Indian artillery, aircraft, and other systems that would help it better defend its border with Pakistan.[81] He reiterated that request in another visit in December 2013,[82] but India resisted in order not to become ever more directly involved in the conflict in Afghanistan or alarm Pakistan. Ghani cancelled that request, as discussed above, apparently to avoid complicating his outreach to Pakistan. Ghani visited India in April 2015 to engage directly with the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has not changed India's policy on Afghanistan but is said to have concerns about Ghani's emphasis on engaging Pakistani leaders.

India's past involvement in Afghanistan reflects its longstanding concerns about potential Pakistani influence and Islamic extremism emanating from Afghanistan. India supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban in the mid-1990s and retains ties to Alliance figures. Many Northern Alliance figures have lived in India, although Indian diplomats stress they have close connections to Afghanistan's Pashtuns as well.

India's Development Activities in Afghanistan

Prior to 2011, India limited its involvement in Afghanistan to development issues. India is the fifth-largest single country donor to Afghan reconstruction, funding projects worth over $1.5 billion, with an additional $500 million announced in May 2011. Indian officials assert that all their projects are focused on civilian, not military, development and are in line with the

[81] Hamid Shalzi. "Afghanistan's Karzai Seeks Indian Military Aid Amid Tensions with Pakistan." *Reuters*, May 19, 2013.

[82] "Hamid Karzai Heads to India Waving Wish List of Military Hardware." Livemint.com, December 11, 2013.

development priorities set by the Afghan government. India, along with the Asian Development Bank, financed a $300 million project, mentioned above, to bring electricity from Central Asia to Afghanistan. It has also renovated the well-known Habibia High School in Kabul and in late 2015 completed a $67 million renovation of Darulaman Palace as the permanent house for Afghanistan's parliament. At a cost of about $85 million, India financed the construction of a road to the Iranian border in remote Nimruz province, linking landlocked Afghanistan to Iran's Chahbahar port on the Arabian Sea. India constructed a 42 Megawatt hydroelectric Selwa Dam in Herat Province at a cost of about $77 million. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Herat in June to formally inaugurate the project, which increases electricity availability in the province. In December 2011, an Indian firm, the Steel Authority of India, Ltd. (SAIL) was declared winning bidder on three of four blocs of the Hajji Gak iron ore project in Bamiyan Province.

India is also helping Afghanistan's Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) with its efforts to build local governance organizations, and it provides 1,000 scholarships per year for Afghans to undergo higher education in India. Some Afghans want to enlist even more Indian assistance in training Afghan bureaucrats in accounting, forensic accounting, oversight, and other disciplines that will promote transparency in Afghan governance.

Russia, Central Asian States, and China

Some neighboring and nearby states take an active interest not only in Afghan stability, but in the U.S. military posture that supports U.S. operations in Afghanistan. The region to the north of Afghanistan is a growing factor in U.S. efforts to rely less on routes through Pakistan to bring out the substantial amount of equipment that will be withdrawn as most U.S. forces depart.

Russia/Northern Distribution Network

Russia seeks to contain U.S. power in Central Asia, but tacitly accepts the U.S. presence as furthering the battle against radical Islamists based in Afghanistan. In part acting on the latter interest, Russia cooperated in developing the Northern Distribution Network supply line to Afghanistan. In February 2009, Russia allowed a resumption of shipment of nonlethal equipment into Afghanistan through Russia. (Russia had suspended the shipments in 2008 over differences over the Russia-Georgia conflict.) About half of all ground cargo for U.S. forces in Afghanistan flowed through the Northern Distribution Network from 2011-2014, despite the extra costs as compared to the Pakistan route, and the route played a significant role in removing much U.S. equipment during the 2014 U.S./NATO troop drawdown. In 2016, Russia has publicly offered to play a role in combatting Islamic State affiliates in Afghanistan, although the offer appeared to be an effort to justify its military intervention in Syria that is not fully in line with U.S. efforts to resolve the civil war in that country.

Afghan views of Russia are also colored by the legacy of the Soviet occupation. However, in line with Russian official comments in June 2010 that more economic and social assistance is needed there, Russia is investing $1 billion in Afghanistan to develop its electricity capacity and build out other infrastructure. Included in those investments are implementation of an agreement, reached during a Karzai visit to Moscow on January 22, 2011, for Russia to resume long dormant Soviet occupation-era projects such as expanding the Salang Tunnel connecting the Panjshir Valley to Kabul, hydroelectric facilities in Kabul and Baghlan provinces, a customs terminal, and a university in Kabul. Russia is also raising its profile with a $25 million investment in the Kabul Housebuilding Factory, the country's largest factory, and a $20 million project to renovate the former "Soviet House of Science and Culture" as the "Russian Cultural Center" that will expand Russia's cultural influence in Afghanistan. In November 2010, in its most significant intervention

in Afghanistan since its occupation, Russian officers reportedly joined U.S. and Afghan forces attempting to interdict narcotics trafficking in Afghanistan.

During the 1990s, after its 1989 withdrawal and the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban with some military equipment and technical assistance in order to blunt Islamic militancy emanating from Afghanistan.[83] The Taliban government was the only one in the world to recognize Chechnya's independence, and some Chechen fighters fighting alongside Taliban/Al Qaeda forces have been captured or killed.

Central Asian States

These states are potentially crucial to Afghanistan stability. Cooperation among the Central Asian states is necessary for the success of the New Silk Road (NSR) strategy that seeks to help Afghanistan become a trade crossroads between South and Central Asia. An increasing amount of trade is flowing from Afghanistan to and through the Central Asian states, and Afghanistan earns key transit fees and customs duties from this commerce. The revival of a long-standing plan to establish Afghanistan as a transit hub for Central Asian natural gas (*TAPI* pipeline) is discussed later in this report under "Development in Key Sectors." In 1996, several of the Central Asian states banded together with Russia and China into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization because of the perceived Taliban threat.

- *Kazakhstan*. Since 2001, Kazakhstan has allowed the use of its air facilities for operations in Afghanistan but only in case of emergency. In May 2011, Kazakhstan became the first Central Asian state to pledge forces to Afghanistan (four noncombat troops). In 2010, Kazakhstan agreed to allow U.S. over flights of lethal military equipment to Afghanistan, enabling U.S. aircraft to fly materiel directly from the United States to Bagram Airfield. Kazakhstan funded a $50 million program to develop Afghan professionals.
- *Tajikistan*. On security cooperation, Tajikistan allows access primarily to French combat aircraft. The Panj bridge, built largely with U.S. funds, has become a major thoroughfare for goods to move between Afghanistan and Tajikistan.
- *Uzbekistan*. A backer of ethnic Uzbek faction leader Abdul Rashid Dostam, Uzbekistan allowed use of Karshi-Khanabad air base by OEF forces from October 2001 until a rift emerged in May 2005 over Uzbekistan's crackdown against riots in Andijon. Uzbekistan's March 2008 agreement with Germany for it to use Karshi-Khanabad air base temporarily, for the first time since the rift with the United States, suggested potential for resumed U.S.-Uzbek cooperation on Afghanistan. Renewed U.S. discussions with Uzbekistan apparently bore some fruit with the Uzbek decision in February 2009 to allow the use of Navoi airfield for shipment of U.S./NATO goods into Afghanistan. As noted below, railway lines are being built from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has long asserted that the group Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), allegedly responsible for four simultaneous February 1999 bombings in Tashkent that nearly killed President Islam Karimov, is active in Afghanistan. The IMU is linked to Al Qaeda.[84] One of its leaders, Juma Namangani, reportedly was killed while commanding Taliban/Al Qaeda forces in Konduz in November 2001.

[83] Risen, James. "Russians Are Back in Afghanistan, Aiding Rebels." *New York Times*, July 27, 1998.

[84] The IMU was named a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department in September 2000.

- *Turkmenistan*. Turkmenistan has generally taken a position of "positive neutrality" on Afghanistan. It does not allow its territory to be part of the Northern Distribution Network and no U.S. forces have been based in Turkmenistan. This neutrality essentially continues the policy Turkmenistan had when the Taliban was in power. Turkmenistan was the only Central Asian state to actively engage the Taliban government, possibly viewing engagement as a more effective means of preventing spillover of radical Islamic activity from Afghanistan. It saw Taliban control as facilitating construction of the TAPI natural gas pipeline, discussed above, that was under consideration during Taliban rule and discussion of which has been revived in recent years. Still, the September 11 attacks on the United States stoked Turkmenistan's fears of the Taliban and its Al Qaeda guests and caused the country to publicly support the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan.

China[85]

China's involvement in Afghanistan has been primarily to secure access to Afghan minerals and other resources; to help its Pakistan ally avoid encirclement by India; and to reduce the Islamist militant threat to China itself. China is concerned about the potential for Islamic militants who operate in Afghanistan to assist China's restive Uighur (Muslim) community. The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is an opposition group in China, some of whose operatives are based in Afghanistan. A major organizer of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China has a small border with a sparsely inhabited sliver of Afghanistan known as the "Wakhan Corridor," and it is building border access routes and supply depots to facilitate China's access to Afghanistan through the corridor.

Since 2012, China has deepened its involvement in Afghan security issues and, as noted, has taken on a more prominent role as a potential mediator in Afghan reconciliation in part to try to lessen the perceived threat from militant Islamists based in Afghanistan. In September 2012, China and Afghanistan signed security and economic agreements. No Chinese forces ever deployed to Afghanistan, but China has been training small numbers of ANP at a People's Armed Police facility in China since 2006, with a focus on counternarcotics. It also has offered training for ANDSF officers at People's Liberation Army training colleges and universities. In October 2014, China hosted Ghani for bilateral meetings as well as to attend a meeting of the "Heart of Asia" (Istanbul ministerial) process in Beijing. As a consequence of that visit, some Taliban figures reportedly visited China, apparently accompanied by Pakistani security officials, as part of an effort to promote an Afghan political settlement.[86] Perhaps because of China's growing role in Afghanistan's affairs, CEO Abdullah said in May 2016 that Afghanistan supports China's position on the South China Sea and China's efforts to resolve South China Sea issues through peaceful means. President Ghani did not reiterate that position, suggesting that this statement - which conflicts to some extent with the U.S. position - might not have been vetted throughout the Afghan government.

Still, many experts see China's activities in Afghanistan as primarily economically driven. From 2002 to 2014, China provided about $255 million in economic aid to Afghanistan. Chinese delegations continue to assess the potential for new investments in such sectors as mining and

[85] For more information, see CRS Report RL33001, *U.S.-China Counterterrorism Cooperation: Issues for U.S. Policy*, by Shirley A. Kan.

[86] Edward Wong. "Exploring a New Role: Peacemaker in Afghanistan." *New York Times*, January 14, 2015.

energy.[87] The cornerstone of China's investment to date has been the development of the Aynak copper mine south of Kabul, but that project is stalled over security issues surrounding the mine site. In 2012, China National Petroleum Co. was awarded the rights to develop oil deposits in the Amu Darya basin (see below). Transportation and trade routes through Afghanistan comport with China's vision of a "One Belt, One Road" regional network linking East, Central, and South Asia—China's version of the U.S.-led New Silk Road. During the 2014, Ghani visit, China agreed to train 3,000 Afghan bureaucrats and to provide an additional $330 million in bilateral aid over the coming three years.

During the Taliban era, in December 2000, sensing China's increasing concern about Taliban policies, a Chinese official delegation met with Mullah Umar. However, China did not enthusiastically support U.S. military action against the Taliban, possibly because China was wary of a U.S. military buildup nearby.

Persian Gulf States

The Gulf states are considered a key part of the effort to stabilize Afghanistan. As noted, the late Ambassador Holbrooke focused substantial U.S. attention—and formed a multilateral task force—to try to curb continuing Gulf resident donations to the Taliban in Afghanistan. He maintained that these donations are a larger source of Taliban funding than is the narcotics trade. The Gulf states have also been a source of development funds and for influence with some Afghan clerics and factions.

- *Saudi Arabia*. Saudi Arabia has a long history of involvement in Afghanistan; it channeled hundreds of millions of dollars to the *mujahedin* during the war against the Soviet occupation and Saudi Arabia was one of three countries to formally recognize the Taliban government. Saudi Arabia broke diplomatic relations with the Taliban in September 2001 and permitted the United States to use a Saudi base for command of U.S. air operations over Afghanistan, but it did not permit U.S. airstrikes from the base. A majority of Saudi citizens practice the strict Wahhabi brand of Islam similar to that of the Taliban, and press reports indicate that, in late 1998, Saudi and Taliban leaders discussed, but did not agree on, a plan for a panel of Saudi and Afghan Islamic scholars to decide Bin Laden's fate. More recently, Saudi Arabia has brokered some of the negotiations between the Afghan government and "moderate" Taliban figures. In November 2012 Saudi Arabia agreed to fund a $100 million mosque and education center in Kabul. President Ghani visited Saudi Arabia in late October 2014, in part to perform the Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca) but also to hold meetings with Saudi officials to reenergize talks on an Afghan political settlement.
- *UAE*. The United Arab Emirates, the third country that recognized the Taliban regime, is emerging as another major donor to Afghanistan. The UAE has deployed about 250 troops to OEF and ISAF security missions in southern Afghanistan, including Helmand province. Some are military medical personnel who run small clinics and health programs for Afghans in the provinces where they operate. The UAE has kept some forces in Afghanistan since the 2014 security transition. In addition, the UAE has donated at least $135 million to Afghanistan since 2002, according to the Afghan Finance Ministry. Projects funded include housing in Qandahar, roads in Kabul, a hospital in Zabol

[87] CRS conversations with Chinese officials in Beijing. August 2007.

province, and a university in Khost. At the same time, the UAE property market has been an outlet for investment by Afghan leaders who may have acquired their funds through soft loans from the scandal-plagued Kabul Bank or through corruption connected to donor contracts or other businesses.

- *Qatar*. Until 2011, Qatar was not regarded as a significant player on the Afghanistan issue. It did not recognize the Taliban regime when it was in power. However, in 2010 Qatar offered itself as a mediator on Afghan reconciliation with the Taliban and U.S.-Taliban confidence-building measures that led to the release of Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, as discussed above. Qatar accepts the presence of Taliban mediators and served as a location for a Taliban political office that opened briefly in June 2013. Karzai's two visits to Qatar in 2013 were related to the opening of the Taliban office in Doha. The Taliban figures who run the Taliban office in Doha publicly expressed support for Mullah Akhunzadeh's succession to Mullah Mansour.
- *Bahrain*. In January 2009, Bahrain sent 100 police officers to Afghanistan to help U.S./NATO-led stabilization operations there. That tour extended until the end of the ISAF mission at the end of 2014.

Aid and Economic Development

Experts have long asserted that economic development is pivotal to Afghanistan's long-term stability as donors reduce their financial involvement in Afghanistan. In December 2011, the World Bank released a report warning that an abrupt aid cutoff could lead to fiscal implosion, loss of control over the security sector, the collapse of political authority, and possible civil war. The role of the economy in post-2014 Afghanistan was assessed in an Administration report released in December 2011, called the "U.S. Economic Strategy for Afghanistan."[88]

Afghan economy is struggling against a donor drawdown. The economy (Gross Domestic Product, GDP) has grown an average of 9% per year since 2001, although aid cutbacks and political uncertainty about the post-2104 security situation caused a slowing to 4% growth in 2013 and a further slowing to 2% in each of 2014 and 2015. Similarly, lower than expected domestic revenue generation in 2014 produced a $550 million budgetary shortfall in the final months of that year. Previously, government revenues had been increasing steadily, and totaled about $2.5 billion for 2013. U.S. officials say the government is increasingly able to execute parts of its budget and deliver basic goods and services.

Donor aid already accounts for more than 95% of Afghanistan's GDP and at least two-thirds of total Afghan government expenditures (operating budget and development budget). Afghan officials say that Afghanistan needs at least $10 billion in donated funds per year from 2014 until 2025, at which time Afghanistan expects to be financially self-sufficient. Afghan government revenue comes mostly through taxation (68%), including through a flat 20% corporate tax rate, and most of the remainder from customs duties. The tax system has been computerized. Since the international community intervened in Afghanistan in 2001, there have been debates over many aspects of aid to Afghanistan, including amounts, mechanisms for delivery, donor coordination, and distribution within Afghanistan.

[88] The report, produced by the National Security Staff, was released December 2, 2011. It was mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2011 (Section 1535 of P.L. 111-383).

Some economic sectors in Afghanistan have been developed largely with private investment, including by well-connected Afghan officials or former officials who founded companies. Therefore, it is often difficult to determine the effects on Afghanistan's economy of aid, as compared to the effects of investment, trade, and other variables. As noted above, in 2011 the United States articulated a vision of greater Afghan economic integration in the region and its role in a "New Silk Road" trading pattern that would presumably accelerate Afghan private sector growth and customs revenue receipts. However, implementation of that vision has been slow due to political differences within the region and the difficult security situation regionally.

Further hindering Afghanistan is that its economy and society are still fragile after decades of warfare that left about 2 million dead, 700,000 widows and orphans, and about 1 million Afghan children raised in refugee camps outside Afghanistan. More than 3.5 million Afghan refugees have since returned, although a comparable number remain outside Afghanistan. The literacy rate is very low and Afghanistan has a small, although growing, pool of skilled labor, middle managers, accountants, and information professionals. And, the widespread government corruption in Afghanistan, which is analyzed in greater detail in CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman, has caused some donors to withhold funds or to avoid giving aid directly to the Afghan government.

U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan

During the 1990s, the United States was the largest single provider of assistance to the Afghan people even though no U.S. aid went directly to the Taliban government when it was in power during 1996-2001; monies were provided through relief organizations. Between 1985 and 1994, the United States had a cross-border aid program for Afghanistan, implemented by USAID personnel based in Pakistan. Citing the difficulty of administering this program, there was no USAID mission for Afghanistan from the end of FY1994 until the reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan in late 2001. **Table 12** at the end of this report portrays U.S. assistance to Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban. The cited figures do not include costs for U.S. combat operations. For information on those costs, see CRS Report RL33110, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, by Amy Belasco.

Aid Oversight and Conditionality

Some laws have required the withholding of U.S. aid subject to Administration certification of Afghan compliance on a variety of issues, including counternarcotics efforts, corruption, vetting of the Afghan security forces, Afghan human rights practices and protection of women's rights, and other issues. All required certifications have been made and virtually no U.S. funds have been withheld from Afghanistan. The FY2016 Consolidated Appropriation (H.R. 2029) conditions ESF and INCLE funding to Afghanistan on various requirements, including reducing Afghan official corruption, establishing goals for the use of U.S. aid, setting conditions to increase accountability for the Afghan government in the use of U.S. funds, and implementation of laws and policies to protect individual rights and civil society and govern democratically. Separately, the FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 114-92) states that the Administration should undertake training for the ANDSF in protecting the rights of women and girls. According to Administration budget documents, the FY2017 Administration aid request for Afghanistan would condition a portion of the U.S. economic aid provided to the achievement of development and reform results.

The FY2008 defense authorization bill (P.L. 110-181) established a "Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction" (SIGAR) modeled on a similar outside auditor for Iraq. Funds provided for the SIGAR are in the tables below. The SIGAR issues quarterly reports and specific

audits of aspects of Afghan governance and security, with particular attention to how U.S.-provided funds have been used. The SIGAR, as of July 2012, is John Sopko. Some executive branch agencies, including USAID, have criticized some SIGAR audits as inaccurate or as highlighting problems that the agencies are already correcting. For example, DOD took strong exception to a December 4, 2013, audit by the SIGAR that asserted that the U.S. military had failed to adequately manage risk accounting for $3 billion in DOD funds for the ANDSF.[89] The FY2016 Consolidated Appropriation, referenced above, provides $57 million for SIGAR operations in FY2016.

Aid Authorization: Afghanistan Freedom Support Act

A key post-Taliban aid authorization bill, S. 2712, the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act (AFSA) of 2002 (P.L. 107-327, December 4, 2002), as amended, authorized about $3.7 billion in U.S. civilian aid for FY2003-FY2006. The law, whose authority has now expired, was intended to create a central source for allocating funds; that aid strategy was not implemented. However, some of the humanitarian, counternarcotics, and governance assistance targets authorized by the act were met or exceeded by appropriations. The act authorized the following:

- $15 million per year in counternarcotics assistance (FY2003-FY2006);
- $10 million per year for FY2003-FY2005 for political development, including national, regional, and local elections;
- $80 million total to benefit women and for Afghan human rights oversight ($15 million per year for FY2003-FY2006 for the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs, and $5 million per year for FY2003-FY2006 to the Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan);
- $425 million per year for FY2003-FY2006 in humanitarian and development aid;
- $300 million for an Enterprise Fund; and
- $550 million in drawdowns of defense articles and services for Afghanistan and regional militaries. (The original law provided for $300 million in drawdowns. That was increased by subsequent appropriations laws.)

A subsequent law (P.L. 108-458, December 17, 2004), implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, contained "The Afghanistan Freedom Support Act Amendments of 2004." The subtitle mandated the appointment of a U.S. coordinator of policy on Afghanistan and requires additional Administration reports to Congress.

A bill in the 110th Congress to reauthorize AFSA, H.R. 2446, passed by the House on June 6, 2007 (406-10). It would have authorized about $1.7 billion in U.S. economic aid and $320 in military aid (including drawdowns of equipment) per year for several years. A Senate version (S. 3531), with fewer provisions than the House bill, was not taken up by the full Senate.

Direct Support to the Afghan Government

Currently, the United States disburses about 50% of its donated aid funds through the Afghan government. The Kabul Conference (July 20, 2010) communiqué endorsed a goal of 50% direct funding and for 80% of all funds to align with Afghan government priorities. USAID has approved over a dozen Afghan ministries to receive direct U.S. aid, some of which is channeled

[89] David Zucchino. "Watchdog Faults U.S. Military's Oversight of Aid to Afghanistan." *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 2013.

through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), run by the World Bank. Donors have contributed about $6 billion to the ARTF, the funds of which are about equally split between funding Afghan salaries and priority development investments.

No "enterprise fund" that was envisioned in the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act was ever established. However, small amounts of USAID funds have been used to assist a few Afghan enterprises, at least partially fulfilling the intent of the legislation.

Development Partnership Announced on March 24, 2015. In an effort to increase cooperation with the Afghan government in assisting development, during the Ghani visit to Washington, DC, the Administration announced an $800 million "New Development Partnership." The funds, which will come from already appropriated funds (not representing a request for additional funding), will be overseen by USAID, and will be disbursed on programs in Afghanistan "only after agreed reforms or development results have been accomplished, as measured by clear and objective indicators of achievement."[90]

National Solidarity Program

Through the ARTF, the United States supports an Afghan government program—implemented through the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development—that promotes local decision making on development—the "National Solidarity Program" (NSP). Donors have provided the program with over $600 million, about 90% of which has been U.S. funding. The program provides block grants of up to $60,000 per project to local councils to implement their priority projects. The program has given at least 20,000 grants to a total of 21,600 villages that participate in the program—participation requires setting up a Community Development Council (CDC) to help decide on what projects should be funded. The Afghan Funds from the NSP have brought bridges, water wells, and some hydroelectric power to numerous villages. The program has been widely hailed by many institutions as a highly effective, Afghan-run program. U.S. funds for the program are drawn from a broad category of ESF for "good governance."[91]

Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund

The Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund was set up in early 2013 to channel an additional percentage of U.S. aid directly to Afghanistan. The multilateral fund is managed by the Asian Development Bank. An initial U.S. contribution of $45 million was made in March 2013, but was supplemented by tens of millions more to support a power grid project running north-south. (This is not the same program as the U.S. "Afghan Infrastructure Fund," which is a DOD-State program to fund Afghan infrastructure projects.)

Other Donor Aid

As shown in **Table 9**, non-U.S. donors, including such institutions as the EU and the Asian Development Bank, provided over $29 billion in assistance to Afghanistan from the fall of the Taliban until 2012. When combined with U.S. aid, this by far exceeds the $27.5 billion for reconstruction identified by the IMF as required for 2002-2010. Major pledges have been made primarily at donor conferences such as Tokyo (2002), Berlin (April 2004), Kabul (April 2005), London (February 2006), Paris (June 2008), London (January 2010), and Tokyo (July 2012).

[90] State Department factsheet, "Strengthening the Strategic Partnership of the United States and Afghanistan." March 24, 2015.

[91] "Gunmen in Afghanistan Kill 9 Local Aid Workers." *New York Times*, June 3, 2015.

The Tokyo conference (July 8, 2012) focused on identifying sources of post-2014 assistance (2012-2022 is termed the "transformation decade").[92] At the conference, the United States and its partners pledged a total of $16 billion in aid to Afghanistan through 2015 ($4 billion per year for 2012-2015) and agreed to sustain support through 2017 at levels at or near the past decade. As part of that overall pledge, at the conference, then-Secretary Clinton said the Administration would ask Congress to sustain U.S. aid to Afghanistan at roughly the levels it has been through 2017. Among other major pledges, Japan pledged $5 billion over five years (2012-2017), and Germany pledged $550 million over four years (2014-2016).

The Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) that resulted from the conference stipulated requirements of the Afghan government in governance, anti-corruption, holding free and fair elections, and human rights practices. As an incentive, if Afghanistan meets the benchmarks, the TMAF increases (to 10% by 2014 and to 20% by 2024) the percentage of aid provided through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and other mechanisms that gives Kabul discretion in the use of donated funds. A senior officials meeting held in Kabul on July 3, 2013, to review the Afghan performance found that the Afghan government had met only a few of the stipulated benchmarks and was making slow progress on most of the others. A follow-up to the Tokyo conference was the London Conference that was held on December 4, 2014. At the meeting, which was attended by President Ghani and CEO Abdullah, donor governments assessed the government's progress on the stipulated benchmarks and reiterated their prior pledges of assistance to Afghanistan through 2017. More than 60 countries, including Pakistan, attended.[93] Donors will meet again to assess progress on the TMAF benchmarks and to potentially pledge additional funds for Afghanistan at a meeting to be held in Brussels in October 2016.

Among multilateral lending institutions, the World Bank has been key to Afghanistan's development. In May 2002, the World Bank reopened its office in Afghanistan after 20 years. Its projects have been concentrated in the telecommunications and road and sewage sectors. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has also been playing a major role in Afghanistan, including in financing railway construction. The ADB funded the paving of a road from Qandahar to the border with Pakistan and contributed to a project to bring electricity from Central Asia to Afghanistan. On the eve of the London donor's conference of January 28, 2010, the IMF and World Bank announced $1.6 billion in Afghanistan debt relief.

Development in Key Sectors

Efforts to build the legitimate economy are showing some results, by accounts of senior U.S. officials. Some sectors, discussed below, are being developed primarily (although not exclusively) with private investment funding. Private investment has been the main driver of much of the new construction evident particularly in Kabul, including luxury hotels; a $25 million Coca Cola bottling factory (opened in September 2006); apartment and office buildings; and marriage halls and other structures. The bottling factory is located near the Bagrami office park (another private initiative), which includes several other factories. The Serena luxury hotel was built by the Agha Khan foundation, a major investor in Afghanistan. Phase one of a major, multi-billion dollar development near the Kabul airport, called "New Kabul City," is in the early stages of construction.

[92] http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/article/the-tokyo-declaration-partnership-for-self-reliance-in-afghanistan-from-transition-to-trandsf.

[93] Michael Gordon. "Meeting Afghan Leaders, Donors Pledge Support." *New York Times*, December 5, 2014.

An arm of DOD, called the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations (TFBSO), sought to facilitate additional private investment in Afghanistan. However, A SIGAR report of November 2014 assessed that the Task Force's efforts yielded very little result. Funding for the Task Force is included in **Table 12** at the end of this report.

Uncertainty about the post-2014 political and security situation caused some Afghan businessmen to relocate outside the country, or to develop external components of their business in case the situation in Afghanistan deteriorates. The following sections outline what has been accomplished with U.S. and international donor funds and private investment.

Education

Despite the success in enrolling Afghan children in school since the Taliban era (8 million in school, of which about 40% are girls), continuing Taliban attacks on schools have caused some to close. Afghanistan's university system is said to be highly underfunded, in part because Afghans are entitled to free higher education (to the B.A. level) by the Constitution, which means that demand for the higher education far outstrips Afghan resources. The shortfall is impeding the development of a large enough pool of skilled workers for the Afghan government. Afghanistan requires about $35 million to operate its universities and institutes for one year. A substantial portion of USAID funds have gone directly to the Ministry of Education for the printing and distribution of textbooks.

Health

The health care sector, as noted by Afghan observers, has made considerable gains in reducing infant mortality and giving about 85% of the population at least some access to health professionals. Still, according to some outside groups, nearly 20% of all Afghans had a close relative or friend who died in 2013 because that person was unable to reach medical care or because of unaffordable cost—even though health care is free according to Afghan law and regulations.[94]

USAID funds for health have gone directly to the Ministry of Health to contract with international NGOs to buy medical supplies for clinics. Egypt operates a 65-person field hospital at Bagram Air Base that instructs Afghan physicians, and Jordan operates a similar facility in Mazar-e-Sharif. A $236 million USAID program called "Partnership Contracts for Health" provided immunizations, prenatal exams, and equipment and salaries in 13 provinces.

Roads

Road building is considered a U.S. and international priority. At least 10,000 miles of roads have been built since 2001 by all donors, of which about half was funded by the United States. Road construction has been USAID's largest project category there, accounting for about $2 billion in U.S. spending since the fall of the Taliban.[95] Roads are considered key to enabling Afghan farmers to bring legitimate produce to market in a timely fashion, and former commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan General Eikenberry (later Ambassador) said "where the roads end, the Taliban begin." The major road, the Ring Road (including Highway One from Qandahar to

[94] Rod Nordland. "Aid Group Sees Daunting Obstacles to Health Care for Afghans." *New York Times*, February 26, 2014.

[95] Kevin Seiff. "A Crumbling Investment." *Washington Post*, January 31, 2014.

Kabul), has been completely repaved using funds from various donors, including substantial funds from the Asian Development Bank, at a total expense of about $4 billion (all donors).

Among other major projects completed are a road from Qandahar to Tarin Kowt (Uruzgan province) built by U.S. military personnel, inaugurated in 2005; a road linking the Panjshir Valley to Kabul; and a Salang Bypass Road through Bamiyan province. In several of the most restive provinces, U.S. funds, including CERP, have been used to build small roads linking farming communities to the markets for their products. The October 2014 DOD report states that completing the Khost-Gardez highway is one of four high priority infrastructure projects for USAID. The Afghan government is developing an East-West road across Afghanistan, from Herat to Kabul, but funding only for a few segments (Herat to Chest-e-Sharif, and Maidany Shar to Bamiyan, and Bamiyan City to Yakowlang in that same province) has been identified (from Italy and Japan). Observers add that the Afghan government lacks the resources to adequately maintain the roads built with international funds. Many of the roads built have fallen into disrepair and are marked with major potholes.

Bridges

Afghan officials say that trade with Central Asia increased after a bridge over the Panj River, connecting Afghanistan and Tajikistan, opened in late 2007. The bridge was built with $33 million in (FY2005) U.S. assistance. The bridge is helping what press reports say is robust reconstruction and economic development in the relatively peaceful and ethnically homogenous province of Panjshir, the political base of the Northern Alliance.

Railways

Afghanistan is beginning to develop functioning railways—a sector it lacked as a legacy of security policy during the late 19th century that saw railroads as facilitating invasion of Afghanistan. Rail is considered increasingly crucial to Afghanistan's ability to develop its mineral wealth because it is the means by which minerals can be exported to neighboring countries. Three railway projects are underway. One, a 75 mile line from Mazar-i-Sharif to Hairaton, on the border with Uzbekistan, was completed in March 2011 with $165 million from the Asian Development Bank. It began operations in early 2012 and shortly thereafter began carrying its peak capacity of 4,000 tons of cargo per month. In September 2012, the government established the Afghan Rail Authority to maintain and regulate this sector.

Some planned rail lines might not get built if foreign investors believe they will not yield a significant payoff for their projects in the mining sector. In particular, China has committed to building a rail line from its Mes Aynak copper mine project to the northern border and it is conducting a feasibility study for that railway as of mid-2014. A spur to the Hajji Gak iron mine would be funded by India (about $1 billion) as part of its project there. However, there are indications India and China might opt instead truck their minerals out, a process that would slow full exploitation of these mines. There are also plans to build a line from Herat and Kabul to Qandahar, and then on to the border with Pakistan. The planned railways will link Afghanistan to the former Soviet railway system in Central Asia, and to Pakistan's railway system, increasing Afghanistan's economic integration in the region.

Electricity

This sector has been a major U.S. focus because the expansion of electricity proves popular with the Afghan public. The United States has provided $340 million in direct aid to the national power company, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkas (DABS), to generate revenue from power

provision and manage the nation's electricity grid. Some of the U.S. funding comes from an "Infrastructure Fund" funded by DOD. That authority was provided in the FY2011 DOD authorization bill (P.L. 111-383). Actual funding is depicted in the aid tables below. The DOD report on Afghanistan of October 2014 says that DABS is now operating without government subsidies.

The Afghan government set a goal for electricity to reach 65% of households in urban areas and 25% in rural areas by 2010—a goal that was not met—but USAID says that as of April 2013, DABS serves about 28% of the population. Power shortages in Kabul, caused in part by the swelling of Kabul's population to about 4 million, have been alleviated as of 2009 by Afghan government agreements with several Central Asian neighbors to import electricity, as well as construction of new plants such as that at Tarakhil in north Kabul. Kabul is now generally lit up at night. There has been some criticism of the 105 megawatt Tarakhil plant, built at a cost of about $300 million, because of the high costs of fuel, the questionable need for it, and the possible inability of the Afghan authorities to maintain it. USAID has spent a $35 million to help the national electric utility operate and maintain the plant. In January 2013, Afghanistan gained formal title to the Tarakhil plant as well as two less efficient power plants built by Iran in western Afghanistan. Russia has refurbished some long dormant hydroelectric projects in Afghanistan that were suspended when Soviet troops withdrew in 1989.

Southern Afghanistan Power Projects/Kajaki Dam. Much of the U.S. electricity capacity effort n focused on southern Afghanistan. The key long-term project is to expand the capacity of the Kajaki Dam, located in Helmand Province ("Kandahar-Helmand Power Project," KHPP). Currently, two turbines are operating—one was always working, and the second was repaired by USAID contractors. USAID had planned to further expand capacity of the dam by installing a third turbine (which there is a berth for but which never had a turbine installed.) The DOD report of October 2014 identifies the third turbine as one of the four infrastructure project priorities for USAID. In September 2008, 4,000 NATO troops (Operation Ogap Tsuka) delivered components of the third turbine to the dam, hoping to install it by 2010, but technical and security problems delayed the project. In 2013, USAID decided to instead provide these funds to DABS so that it could contract for completion of the work, and $75 million of the U.S. aid to DABS is obligated for the third turbine installation. About $205 million has been spent by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to improve power lines and substations fed by the dam.[96]

Because the Kajaki Dam project has proceeded slowly, since 2009 the U.S. military and USAID have implemented a plan ("Qandahar Power Bridging Solution") to build smaller substations and generator projects that can bring more electricity to Qandahar and other places in the south quickly, including to the Qandahar Industrial Park. The initiative was intended at least in part to support the U.S.-military led counterinsurgency strategy in Qandahar during 2009-2013. There was extensive criticism of the Bridging Solution based on the cost of fuel for the diesel generators, for which the Afghans are dependent on continued U.S. funding. The October 2014 DOD report on Afghanistan stated that in 2014 DOD reduced subsidies for the fuel and that DABS was shifting to a more market-based pricing for supplying electricity to consumers. However, that shift apparently has proceeded slower and DABS has been unable to afford fuel for the generators to the degree that was expected. Electricity availability in Qandahar and surrounding areas has diminished sharply and many businesses there report struggling to stay in

[96] Michael Phillips. "Afghan Dam Saga Reflects U.S. Travails." *Wall Street Journal*, May 29, 2012.

operation.[97] The shortages are expected to worsen now that the U.S.-funded Bridging Solution concluded at the end of FY2015 (September 30, 2015).

The SIGAR and other experts have also recommended that some attention be shifted to building up northern power distribution routes rather than focusing exclusively on the south and east. Some of the USAID funds provided to DABS, including through the Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund above, have been used to build a north-south power grid. The October 2014 DOD report states that "Power Transmission and Connectivity"—a reference to this project—is one of USAID's four priority infrastructure projects.

There is also an apparent increasing emphasis on providing electricity to individual homes and villages through small solar power installations. A contractor to USAID, IRG, has provided small solar powered-electricity generators to homes in several districts of Afghanistan, alleviating the need to connect such homes to the national power grid. However, there are technical drawbacks, including weather-related inconsistency of power supply and the difficulty of powering appliances that require substantial power. The U.S. broadcasting service to Afghanistan, Radio Azadi, run by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, has given out 20,000 solar-powered radios throughout Afghanistan.

Agriculture

Even though only about 12.5% of Afghanistan's land is arable, about 80% of Afghans live in rural areas and the agriculture sector has always been key to Afghanistan's economy and stability. About 25% of Afghanistan's GDP is contributed by agriculture. The late Ambassador Holbrooke, including in his January 2010 strategy document, outlined U.S. policy to boost Afghanistan's agriculture sector not only to reduce drug production but also as an engine of economic growth. Prior to the turmoil that engulfed Afghanistan in the late 1970s, Afghanistan was a major exporter of agricultural products. From 2002 until the end of 2012, USAID obligated $1.9 billion to build capacity at the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), increase access to markets, and provide alternatives to poppy cultivation, according to a January 2013 SIGAR report.

USAID programs have helped Afghanistan double its legitimate agricultural output over the past five years. One emerging "success story" is growing Afghan exports of high-quality pomegranate juice called Anar. Other countries are promoting not only pomegranates but also saffron, rice, and other crops that draw buyers outside Afghanistan. In 2013, Afghanistan produced 4.5 tons of saffron, most of which was exported abroad. Another emerging success story is Afghanistan's November 2010 start of exports of raisins to Britain.[98] Wheat production was robust in 2009 because of healthy prices for that crop, and Afghanistan is again self-sufficient in wheat production. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has about 110 personnel in Afghanistan on long-term and priority projects; there are also at least 25 agriculture experts from USAID in Afghanistan. Their efforts include providing new funds to buy seeds and agricultural equipment, and to encourage agri-business. In addition, the National Guard from several states deployed nine "Agribusiness Development Teams" to help Afghan farmers with water management, soil enhancement, crop cultivation, and improving the development and marketing of their goods.

U.S. strategy has addressed not only crop choice but also trying to construct the entirety of the infrastructure needed for a healthy legitimate agriculture sector, including road building, security

[97] http://www.tolonews.com/en/business/19094-power-outages-in-kandahar-close-factories.

[98] Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach. "New Hope for Afghan Raisin Farmers." *New York Times*, October 9, 2010.

of the routes to agriculture markets, refrigeration, storage, transit through Pakistan and other transportation of produce, building legitimate sources of financing, and other aspects of the industry. U.S. officials in Kabul say that Pakistan's restrictions on trade between Afghanistan and India had prevented a rapid expansion of Afghan pomegranate exports to that market, but the transit trade agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan, discussed above, is expected to alleviate some of these bottlenecks. Dubai is another customer for Afghan pomegranate exports.

There is a vibrant timber industry in the northeast provinces. However, the exports are illegal. Deforestation has been outlawed because of the potential for soil erosion and other economic and environmental effects.

In terms of specific programming, USAID has a $150 million program for the relatively safe areas of Afghanistan to continue to develop licit crops. The Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, and West (IDEA-NEW) program is planned to run through FY2014. In southern and eastern areas of the country where counterinsurgency operations are ongoing, USAID's $474 million Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture (AVIPA-Plus) program ran through FY2011 and included initiatives coordinated with U.S. counterinsurgency operations in Helmand and Qandahar provinces. The program provided vouchers for wheat seed, fertilizer, and tools, in addition to supporting cash for work programs and small grants to local cooperatives.

Telecommunications

Several Afghan telecommunications firms have been formed and over $1.2 billion in private investment has flowed into this sector, according to the DOD Task Force for Business and Stability Operations. With startup funds from the Agha Khan Foundation (the Agha Khan is leader of the Isma'ili community, which is prevalent in northern Afghanistan), the highly successful Roshan cellphone company was founded. Another Afghan cellphone firm is Afghan Wireless. The most significant post-Taliban media network is Tolo Television, owned by Moby Media. U.S. funds are being used to supplement the private investment; a $4 million U.S. grant, in partnership with the Asia Consultancy Group, is being used to construct communication towers in Bamiyan and Ghor provinces. The Afghan government is attempting to link all major cities by fiber optic cable.

Airlines

The 52-year-old national airline, Ariana, is said to be in significant financial trouble due to corruption that has affected its safety ratings and left it unable to service a heavy debt load. However, there are new privately run airlines, such as Safi Air (run by the Safi Group, which has built a modern mall in Kabul) and Kam Air. Another, Pamir, was ordered closed in 2010 due to safety concerns. In January 2013, the U.S. military ceased contracting with an Afghan airline, Kam Air, on the grounds that it was helping traffic opium; the U.S. military rescinded the ruling after Afghan complaints that questioned the allegation. The Afghan government agreed to investigate the allegations.

Mining and Gems

Afghanistan's mining sector has been largely dormant since the Soviet invasion. Some Afghan leaders complain that not enough has been done to revive such potentially lucrative industries as minerals mining, such as of copper and lapis lazuli (a stone used in jewelry). The issue became more urgent in June 2010 when the DOD Task Force for Business and Stability Operations announced, based on surveys, that Afghanistan may have untapped minerals worth over $1

trillion.[99] Although copper and iron are the largest categories by value, there are believed to also be significant reserves of such minerals as lithium in western Afghanistan—lithium is crucial to the new batteries being used to power electric automobiles. However, as noted above, some of the expected revenue from this sector might not materialize if investors decide not to build rail lines needed to export the minerals from Afghanistan in large volumes. An additional brake on investment is the lack of legislative action on a new Law on Mines. The Afghan Cabinet approved a draft in February 2013 and sent it to the National Assembly in July 2013, but the Assembly has not acted on it to date.

Mes Aynak Copper Field. A major project, signed in November 2007, is with China Metallurgical Group for the company to invest $3.0 billion to develop Afghanistan's Mes Aynak copper field in Lowgar Province. The agreement, viewed as generous to the point where it might not be commercially profitable for China Metallurgical Group, includes construction of two coal-fired electric power plants (one of which will supply more electricity to Kabul city); a segment of railway (discussed above); and a road from the project to Kabul. Work on the mine was slowed by various factors, including the need to clear mines in the area and to excavate ancient Buddhist artifacts that local activists insist be preserved. Actual extraction was expected to begin in mid-2012, and still has not begun. U.S. forces do not directly protect the project, but U.S. forces have set up small bases on some of the roads leading to the mine project to provide general stability there.

Hajji Gak Iron Ore Project. In September 2011 seven bids were submitted for another large mining project, the Hajji Gak iron ore mine (which may contain 60 billion tons of iron ore) in Bamiyan Province. The bids—from Chinese, Indian, and other firms—were evaluated and, in late 2011, the Steel Authority for India Ltd. (SAIL) was awarded the largest share of the project. One of the four blocs of the project was awarded to Kilo Gold of Canada. The project, involving an investment of nearly $11 billion, is expected to generate $200 million in annual government revenues when fully operational (by 2017), although this level might not be reached unless the associated rail lines are built to allow export in high volumes. SAIL denied reports in May 2015 that it would not proceed with the project, saying only that it had completed an assessment of the costs and benefits of the project.

Other mining projects have been awarded (subject to finalized contract negotiations):

- The Balkhab coooper mine in Sar-i-Pol Province, awarded to Afghan Gold and Minerals Co.
- The Shaida copper mine in Herat Province, awarded to Afghan Minerals Group
- The Badakshan gold project, in that province, awarded to Turkish-Afghan Mining Co.
- Zarkashan copper and gold project (Ghazni Province), awarded to Sterling Mining/Belhasa International LLC.

Oil, Gas, and Related Pipelines

Years of war have stunted developed of a hydrocarbons energy sector in Afghanistan. The country has no hydrocarbons export industry and a small refining sector that provides some of Afghanistan's needs for gasoline or other fuels. Most of Afghanistan's fuel comes from neighboring states. However, Afghanistan's prospects in this sector appeared to brighten by the

[99] Risen, James. "U.S. Identifies Mineral Riches in Afghanistan." *New York Times*, June 14, 2010.

announcement in March 2006 of an estimated 3.6 billion barrels of oil and 36.5 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, amounts that could make Afghanistan self-sufficient in energy or even able to export. In a major development, on December 15, 2010, the Afghan government let a six-month contract to a local firm, Ghazanfar Neft Gas (Ghazanfar Group), to collect and market crude oil from the Angot field in northern Afghanistan (part of a field that may contain 80 million barrels of oil), initially producing at the low rate of 800 barrels per day.

The energy sector took a major step forward with the awarding in early 2012 of development rights to the Amu Darya basin (northern Afghanistan) oil fields to China National Petroleum Co. The field began producing at about 5,000 barrels per day in early 2013, with a longer-term potential of 145,000 barrels per day. The $3 billion development has a local partner, the Watan Group, owned by Karzai relatives Rashid and Rateb Popal.

Among pending development, in November 2012 a consortium consisting of Kuwait Energy, Dragon Oil of UAE, Turkey's state-owned TPAO, and the Ghazanfar Group (see above) bid to develop part of the "Afghan-Tajik Basin," estimated to hold 950 million barrels of oil, 7 trillion cubic feet of gas, and other gas liquids. China National Petroleum Company won a contract to develop large oil fields in Balkh Province (Angot field, including Kasha Kari bloc and others), estimated to hold 1.8 billion barrels of oil.

USAID has funded test projects to develop gas resources in northern Afghanistan. A key project is to build a 200 megawatt gas-fired thermal plant and associated transmission lines in northern Afghanistan ("Shehbergan Program"). The October 2014 DOD report identifies the Shebergan program as one of the four USAID infrastructure priorities for Afghanistan. The plant would be part of a plan to link Afghanistan's natural gas field in Shehbergan to the population center in Mazar-e-Sharif. The total cost of the project, targeted for 2016 completion, is estimated at $580 million, provided by USAID, the Overseas Private Investment Corp., the Asian Development Bank, and the Afghan government. In December 2013, Turkish National Petroleum Company received a $37 million contract to drill natural gas wells in the Juma and Bashikurd fields (near the Angot oilfields discussed above).

Another pilot project, funded by the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations, is to develop filling stations and convert cars to use compressed natural gas (CNG), which is produced in the gas field in Shehbergan and could provide an inexpensive source of fuel in the future.

During the March 2015 Ghani visit to Washington, DC, the United States and Afghanistan announced forming a "Joint Working Group" to explore ways to support Afghanistan's integration into regional energy markets.

TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) Gas Pipeline Project.

Another long-stalled major energy project apparently has begun to move forward. During 1996-1998, the Clinton Administration supported proposed natural gas and oil pipelines through western Afghanistan as an incentive for the warring factions to cooperate. A consortium led by Los Angeles-based Unocal Corporation proposed a $7.5 billion Central Asia Gas Pipeline that would originate in southern Turkmenistan and pass through Afghanistan to Pakistan, with possible extensions into India.[100] The deterioration in U.S.-Taliban relations after 1998 suspended

[100] Other participants in the Unocal consortium include Delta of Saudi Arabia, Hyundai of South Korea, Crescent Steel of Pakistan, Itochu Corporation and INPEX of Japan, and the government of Turkmenistan. Some accounts say Russia's Gazprom would probably receive a stake in the project. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Moscow), October 30, 1997, p. 3.

hopes for the pipeline projects. In May 2002, the leaders of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan signed preliminary agreements on the project and, in 2011, the Asian Development Bank agreed to finance the project. On July 8, 2014, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India signed an operational agreement on the $10 billion pipeline under which Pakistan and India would each get 42% of the gas transported and Afghanistan would get the remainder. India is a large customer for natural gas and its participation is considered crucial to making the venture commercially viable.[101] The leaders of the four countries involved formally "broke ground" on the pipeline at a ceremony in Turkmenistan on December 15, 2015, although it remains unclear whether the project will go to completion. U.S. officials view this project as a superior alternative to a proposed gas pipeline from Iran to India, transiting Pakistan.

Trade Promotion/Reconstruction Opportunity Zones

The key to U.S. economic strategy, as exemplified by the New Silk Road strategy, is to encourage Afghanistan's trade relationships. The United States is promoting regional economic integration, discussed above, as well as bilateral economic agreements between Afghanistan and its neighbors. A key to the strategy was accomplished in 2011 when Afghanistan and Pakistan finalized provisions to implement their 2010 transit trade agreement. To facilitate Afghanistan's ability to increase trade, USAID funded a five-year project ($63 million total during 2010-2014) to simplify the customs clearance process. This includes new import procedures that have reduced the time needed for imports to clear customs by 45%. On December 13, 2004, the 148 countries of the World Trade Organization voted to start membership talks with Afghanistan.

Earlier, in September 2004, the United States and Afghanistan signed a bilateral trade and investment framework agreement (TIFA), and most of Afghanistan's exports are eligible for duty free treatment under the enhanced Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. The Administration economic strategy report of December 2011 says the Administration is reaching out to Afghan exporters and U.S. importers of Afghan products to make increased use of the GSP program. The TIFA is seen as a prelude to a broader and more complex bilateral free trade agreement, but negotiations on an FTA have not begun. The TIFA is monitored by a joint TIFA "Council" that meets periodically.

Another initiative supported by the United States is the establishment of joint Afghan-Pakistani "Reconstruction Opportunity Zones" (ROZs) which would be modeled after "Qualified Industrial Zones" run by Israel and Jordan in which goods produced in the zones receive duty free treatment for import into the United States. Bills in the 110th Congress, S. 2776 and H.R. 6387, would have authorized the President to proclaim duty-free treatment for imports from ROZs to be designated by the President. In the 111th Congress, a version of these bills was introduced (S. 496 and H.R. 1318), and President Obama specifically endorsed their passage during his March 2009 strategy announcement. H.R. 1318 was incorporated into H.R. 1886, a major Pakistan aid appropriation that passed by the House on June 11, 2009, and then appended to H.R. 2410. However, the version of the major Pakistan aid bill that became law (P.L. 111-73) did not authorize ROZs.

[101] "Operational Accord on Tapi Gas Pipeline Signed." Dawn.com, July 18, 2014.

Table 7. Major Reporting Requirements

Several provisions require Administration reports on numerous aspects of U.S. strategy, assistance, and related issues.

- P.L. 108-458, The Afghanistan Freedom Support Act Amendments required, through the end of FY2010, an overarching annual report on U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Other reporting requirements expired, including required reports (1) on long-term U.S. strategy and progress of reconstruction; (2) on how U.S. assistance is being used; (3) on U.S. efforts to persuade other countries to participate in Afghan peacekeeping; and (4) a joint State and DOD report on U.S. counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan.
- P.L. 110-181 (Section 1230), FY2008 Defense Authorization Act, required a quarterly DOD report on the security situation in Afghanistan through FY2011; the first was submitted in June 2008. Section 1231 required a report on the Afghan national defense and security forces through the end of FY2010. The FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 112-81) amended the reporting requirement—to cover a six-month period, and the requirement has been extended in subsequent National Defense Authorization Acts since. The reports are entitled "Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan"
- Section 1229 of the same law required a quarterly report from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).
- P.L. 111-8 (Omnibus Appropriation, explanatory statement) required a State Department report on the use of funds to address the needs of Afghan women and girls (submitted by September 30, 2009).
- P.L. 111-32, FY2009 Supplemental Appropriation (Section 1116), required a White House report, by the time of the FY2011 budget submission, on whether Afghanistan and Pakistan are cooperating with U.S. policy sufficiently to warrant a continuation of Administration policy toward both countries, as well as efforts by these governments to curb corruption, their efforts to develop a counterinsurgency strategy, the level of political consensus in the two countries to confront security challenges, and U.S. government efforts to achieve these objectives. The report was released with a date of September 30, 2010.
- The same law (Section 1117) required a report, by September 23, 2009, on metrics to be used to assess progress on Afghanistan and Pakistan strategy. A progress report measured against those metrics is to be submitted by March 30, 2010, and every six months thereafter, until the end of FY2011.
- Section 1228 of the FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 111-84) required a report, within 120 days, on the Afghan Provincial Protection Program and other local security initiatives. Section 1235 authorized a DOD-funded study of U.S. force levels needed for eastern and southern Afghanistan, and Section 1226 required a Comptroller General report on the U.S. "campaign plan" for the Afghanistan (and Iraq) effort.
- Sections 1212-1226 of the FY2013 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 4310, P.L. 112-239) contains several reporting or congressional notification requirements on Afghanistan, on issues such as women's rights, an independent assessment of the performance of the ANDSF, negotiations on the bilateral security agreement, the political reconciliation and insurgent reintegration process, the U.S. campaign plan, insider attacks, any changes to U.S. troop levels, and other issues. These sections also contain authorities on use of some DOD funds in Afghanistan, such as CERP and funding for the reintegration process.

Table 8. Comparative Social and Economic Statistics

Population	28 million +. Kabul population is 3 million, up from 500,000 in Taliban era.
Ethnicities/Religions	Pashtun 42%; Tajik 27%; Uzbek 9%; Hazara 9%; Aimak 4%; Turkmen 3%; Baluch 2%.
Size of Religious Minorities	Religions: Sunni (Hanafi school) 80%; Shiite (Hazaras, Qizilbash, and Isma'ilis) 19%; other 1% Christians-estimated 500-8,000 persons; Sikh and Hindu-3,000 persons; Bahai's-400 (declared blasphemous in May 2007); Jews-1 person; Buddhist- small numbers. No Christian or Jewish schools. One church.
Literacy Rate	28% of population over 15 years of age. 43% of males; 12.6% of females.
GDP, and GDP Growth and Unemployment Rates	$33.55 billion purchasing power parity (PPP) in 2012. 109th in the world. Per capita: $1,000 purchasing power parity. 212th in the world. Growth has averaged about 9% per year every year since Taliban rule, but fell to 3.1% in 2013. Growth is forecast at about 5% for 2014 by the IMF. GDP was about $10 billion (PPP) during last year of Taliban rule. Unemployment rate is about 8%, but underemployment rate may be nearly 50%.
Children in School/Schools Built since 2002	8 million, of which 40% are girls. Up from 900,000 boys in school during Taliban era. 4,000 schools built (all donors) and 140,000 teachers hired since Taliban era. 17 universities, up from 2 in 2002. 75,000 Afghans in universities in Afghanistan (35% female); 5,000 when Taliban was in power.
Afghans With Access to Health Coverage	85% with basic health services access-compared to 9% during Taliban era. Infant mortality down 22% since Taliban to 135 per 1,000 live births. 680 clinics built.
Roads Built	About 3,000 miles paved post-Taliban, including repaving of "Ring Road" (78% complete) that circles the country. Kabul-Qandahar drive reduced to 6 hours. About 1,500 additional miles still under construction.
Judges/Courts	Over 1,000 judges (incl. 200 women) trained since fall of Taliban.
Banks Operating	17, including branches in some rural areas, but about 90% of the population still use *hawalas (*informal money transfer services). No banks existed during Taliban era. Some limited credit card use. Some Afghan police now paid by cell phone (E-Paisa).
Access to Electricity	15%-20% of the population. Much of its electricity imported from neighboring states.
Government Revenues (excl. donor funds)	About $2 billion in 2012 compared to $200 million in 2002. Total Afghan budget is about $4.5 billion (including development funds)—shortfall covered by foreign donors, including through Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.
Financial Reserves/Debt	About $4.4 billion, up from $180 million in 2002. Includes amounts due Central Bank. $8 billion bilateral debt, plus $500 million multilateral. U.S. forgave $108 million in debt in 2004, and $1.6 billion forgiven by other creditors in March 2010.
Foreign/Private Investment	About $500 million to $1 billion per year. Four Afghan airlines: Ariana (national) plus at least two privately owned: Safi and Kam. Turkish Air and India Air fly to Kabul.
Legal Exports/ Agriculture	80% of the population is involved in agriculture. Self-sufficiency in wheat production as of May 2009 (first time in 30 years). Exports: $400 million+ (2011): fruits, raisins, melons, pomegranate juice (Anar), nuts, carpets, lapis lazuli gems, marble tile, timber products (Kunar, Nuristan provinces).
Oil Proven Reserves	3.6 billion barrels of oil, 36.5 trillion cubic feet of gas. Current oil production negligible, but USAID funding project to revive oil and gas facilities in the north.
Cellphones/Tourism	About 18 million cellphone subscribers, up from neglibile amounts during Taliban era. Tourism: National park opened in Bamiyan June 2009. Increasing tourist visits.

Sources: CIA, *The World Factbook*; various press and U.S. government official testimony; IMF and World Bank estimates.

Table 9. Major Non-U.S. Pledges for Afghanistan 2002-2012

($ in millions)

Japan	13,150
European Union	2,880
Germany	2,680
Asian Development Bank	2,270
Britain	2,220
World Bank	2,140
India	1,515
Canada	1,255
Iran	1,000
Netherlands	775
Norway	745
Australia	645
Italy	645
Sweden	635
United Nations	445
Denmark	435
France	320
China	255
Spain	220
Turkey	210
Finland	160
Russia	150
Saudi Arabia	140
UAE	135
Switzerland	120
South Korea	115
Czech Republic	105
Total	**$24,900**
(includes donors of under $100 million, not listed)	**(of which $19,700 disbursed—about 80%)**

Sources: Afghanistan Ministry of Finance: Development Cooperation Report, 2010; various U.S. government reports, including Defense Department reports on Afghanistan stability. Figure for Japan includes $5 billion pledged in 2008 (over five years) to fund Afghan National Police salaries, and funds pledged at July 8, 2012, Tokyo donors conference. Figures for Germany included $550 million pledged (over four years) at that meeting.

Note: Table includes donors of over $100 million only.

Table 10. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY1978-FY1998

($ in millions)

Fiscal Year	Devel. Assist.	Econ. Supp. (ESF)	P.L. 480 (Title I and II)	Military	Other (Incl. Regional Refugee Aid)	Total
1978	4.989	—	5.742	0.269	0.789	11.789
1979	3.074	—	7.195	—	0.347	10.616
1980	—	(Soviet invasion-December 1979)			—	—
1981	—	—	—	—	—	—
1982	—	—	—	—	—	—
1983	—	—	—	—	—	—
1984	—	—	—	—	—	—
1985	3.369	—	—	—	—	3.369
1986	—	—	8.9	—	—	8.9
1987	17.8	12.1	2.6	—	—	32.5
1988	22.5	22.5	29.9	—	—	74.9
1989	22.5	22.5	32.6	—	—	77.6
1990	35.0	35.0	18.1	—	—	88.1
1991	30	30	20.1	—	—	80.1
1992	25.0	25.0	31.4	—	—	81.4
1993	10	10	18.0	—	30.2	68.2
1994	3.4	2.0	9.0	—	27.9	42.3
1995	1.8	—	12.4	—	31.6	45.8
1996	—	—	16.1	—	26.4	42.5
1997	—	—	18.0	—	31.9[a]	49.9
1998	—	—	3.6	—	49.14[b]	52.74

Source: Department of State.

a. Includes $3 million for demining and $1.2 million for counternarcotics.

b. Includes $3.3 million in projects targeted for Afghan women and girls, $7 million in earthquake relief aid, 100,000 tons of 416B wheat worth about $15 million, $2 million for demining, and $1.54 for counternarcotics.

Table 11. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY1999-FY2001

($ in millions)

	FY1999	FY2000	FY2001
U.S. Department of Agriculture (DOA) and USAID Food For Peace (FFP), via World Food Program(WFP)	42.0 worth of wheat (100,000 metric tons under "416(b)" program.)	68.875 for 165,000 metric tons. (60,000 tons for May 2000 drought relief)	131.1 (300,000 metric tons under P.L. 480, Title II, and 416(b))
State/Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) via UNHCR and ICRC	16.95 for Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, and to assist their repatriation	14.03 for the same purposes	22.03 for similar purposes
State Department/ Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)	7.0 to various NGOs to aid Afghans inside Afghanistan	6.68 for drought relief and health, water, and sanitation programs	18.934 for similar programs
State Department/HDP (Humanitarian Demining Program)	2.615	3.0	2.8
Aid to Afghan Refugees in Pakistan (through various NGOs)	5.44 (2.789 for health, training—Afghan females in Pakistan)	6.169, of which $3.82 went to similar purposes	5.31 for similar purposes
Counter-Narcotics			1.50
USAID/Office of Transition Initiatives			0.45 (Afghan women in Pakistan)
DOD			
Foreign Military Financing			
Anti-Terrorism			
Economic Support Funds (E.S.F)			
Peacekeeping			
Totals	**76.6**	**113.2**	**182.6**

Source: CRS.

Table 12. Post-Taliban U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan

(appropriations/allocations in $ millions)

Fiscal Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*
ESF	117	239	894	1280	473	1211	1400	2088	3346	2168	1837	1850	851	1225	1200	1000
DA	18.3	42.5	153	170	185	167	149	.4	.3	0	0	0				
GHCS	7.5	49.7	33.4	38	41.5	101	63	58.	92	70	0	0				
Refugee Accounts	160	61	63	47	42	54	44	77	82	65	99	13				
Food Aid	206	74	99	97	108	70	231	82	32	19	0.6	0				
IDA	197	86	11	4	0	0	17	27	30	66	61	14				
INCLE	60	0	220	709	216	252	308	484	589	400	324	6.1	225	325	250	185
NADR	44	34.7	67	38.	18.2	37	27	49	58	69	65	54		43.5	38	37.6
IMET	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.7	1.4	1.8	1.6	2	0.8	.51	1.4	1.2	0.8
FMF	57	191	414	397	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Other	33	23	36	18	0.2	0.1	21	5	5.8	7.4	8	0				
DOD—ASSF	0	0	0	995	1908	7406	2750	5607	9167	10619	9200	5124	4727	4109	3652	3448
DOD—CERP	0	0	40	136	215	209	488	551	1000	400	400	200	30	15		
Infrastructure Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	299	400	325	199	0		
Business Task Force	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	59	239	242	179	64	5		
DOD—CN	0	0	72	225	108	291	193	230	392	376	421	372				
DOD—Other	7.5	165	285	540	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
DEA Counternarc	0.6	2.9	3.7	17	23.7	20	41	19	0	0	0	0				
Total U.S. Assistance	909	970	2392	4712	3339	9818	5732	9292	14854	14800	13058	8084	6097	5725	5165	4672

Sources and Notes: Prepared by Curt Tarnoff, Specialist in Foreign Assistance. Department of State budget, SIGAR reports, and CRS calculations. Does not include USG operational expenses (over $5 billion since 2002). Food aid includes P.L.480 Title II and other programs. "Other" = Office of Transition Initiatives, Treasury Assistance, and Peacekeeping. ESF = Economic Support Funds; DA = Development Assistance; GHCS = Global Health/Child Survival; FMF = Foreign Military Financing; NADR = Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, De-Mining, and Related: IMET = International Military Education and Training; INCLE = International Narcotics and Law Enforcement; ASSF = Afghan Security Forces Funding; IDA = International Disaster Assistance. Includes stipulated levels in FY2016 Consolidated Appropriation (P.L. 114-113). *Denotes Administration request.

Table 13. NATO/ISAF and RSM Contributing Nations

(ISAF figures: just prior to the end of the ISAF mission. RSM figures are current levels)

NATO Countries			Non-NATO Partners		
	ISAF*	RSM		ISAF	RSM
Belgium	160	60	Albania	22	43
Bulgaria	320	126	Armenia	121	65
Canada	0	0	Austria	3	10
Czech Republic	227	222	Australia	273	229
Denmark	145	90	Azerbaijan	94	94
Estonia	4	4	Bahrain	0	0
France	88	0	Bosnia-Herzegovina	8	53
Germany	1,599	850	Croatia	153	106
Greece	9	4	Finland	88	82
Hungary	101	102	Georgia	755	856
Iceland	2	2	Ireland	7	7
Italy	1,411	760	Jordan	626	0
Latvia	11	23	Macedonia	152	39
Lithuania	84	14	Malaysia	2	0
Luxemburg	1	1	Mongolia	40	233
Netherlands	30	83	Montenegro	25	14
Norway	57	46	New Zealand	1	8
Poland	304	113	South Korea	0	0
Portugal	37	10	Sweden	13	27
Romania	327	650	Ukraine	10	8
Slovakia	277	39	United Arab Emirates	35	0
Slovenia	2	7	Tonga	0	0
Spain	181	326			
Turkey	393	509			
United Kingdom	3,906	395			
United States	20,000	6,800			
Total Listed (approximate): ISAF: 32,000 RSM: 13,110					

Sources: ISAF and RSM "Placemat," press reports; and country announcements; DOD report June 2015.

Notes: *ISAF figures reflect Canada combat troop pullout in July-August 2011. Some countries might be contributing additional forces not under ISAF command.

Table 14. Major Factions/Leaders in Afghanistan

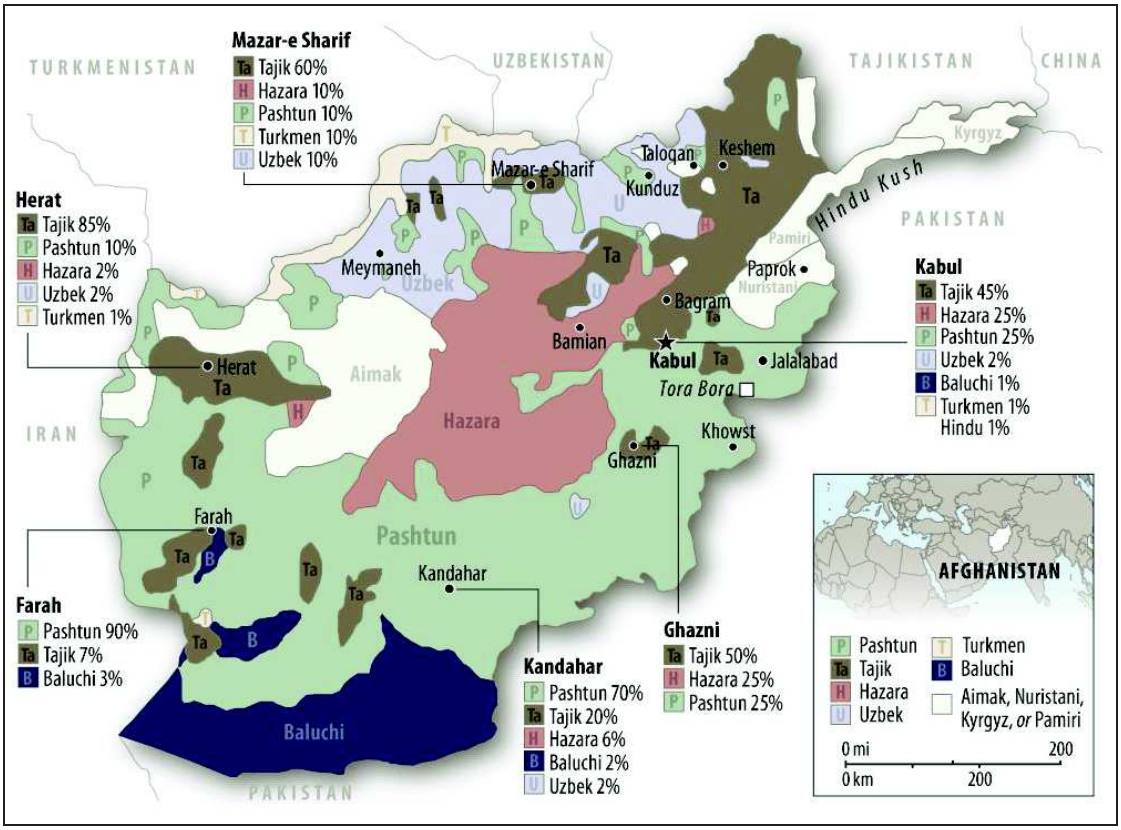
Party/ Leader	Leader	Ideology/ Ethnicity	Regional Base
Taliban	Mullah (Islamic cleric) Muhammad Umar (still at large possibly in Afghanistan). Umar, born in Tarin Kowt, Uruzgan province, is about 65 years old.	Ultra-orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Throughout south and east. Small numbers elsewhere.
Haqqani Network	Jalaludin Haqqani. Allied with Taliban and Al Qaeda. Said to be supported, or at least tolerated, by Pakistani ISI.	Same as above	Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Kabul
Islamic Society (leader of "Northern Alliance")	Party founder, Prof. Burhanuddi Rabbani, assassinated by Taliban in September 2011. Replaced as party head by son, Salahuddin, who is also Foreign Minister. Other key members are CEO Dr. Abdullah, former parliament lower house speaker Yunus Qanooni, and Ismail Khan (Herat area).	Moderate Islamic, mostly Tajik	Much of northern and western Afghanistan, including Kabul
National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan	Abdul Rashid Dostam. Was Karzai rival in October 2004 presidential election, then his top "security adviser." Currently first Vice President.	Secular, left-leaning, Uzbek	Jowzjan, Balkh, Faryab, Sar-i-Pol, and Samangan provinces.
Hizb-e-Wahdat	Composed of Shiite Hazara tribes from central Afghanistan. Former members Karim Khalili is vice president, but Mohammad Mohaqiq is Karzai rival. Generally pro-Iranian. Was part of Rabbani 1992-1996 government, and fought unsuccessfully with Taliban over Bamiyan. Still revered by Hazaras is the former leader of the group, Abdul Ali Mazari, who was captured and killed by the Taliban in March 1995.	Shiite, Hazara tribes	Bamiyan, Ghazni, Dai Kundi province
Pashtun tribal/regional leaders	Various regional governors and local leaders in the east and south; central government led by Ashraf Ghani. Karzai family prominent in Qandahar Province.	Moderate Islamic, Pashtun	Dominant in the south and east
Hizb-e-Islam Gulbuddin (HIG)	*Mujahedin* party leader Gulbuddin Hikmatyar. Was part of Soviet-era U.S.-backed "Afghan Interim Government" based in Peshawar, Pakistan. Was nominal "prime minister" in 1992-1996 mujahedin government but never actually took office. Lost power base around Jalalabad to the Taliban in 1994, and fled to Iran before being expelled in 2002. Still active in operations east of Kabul, but open to ending militant activity. Leader of a rival Hizb-e-Islam faction, Yunus Khalis, the mentor of Mullah Umar, died July 2006.	Orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Small groups in Nangarhar, Nuristan, and Kunar provinces
Islamic Union	Abd-I-Rab Rasul Sayyaf. Islamic conservative, leads Islamic conservatives in parliament. Lived many years in and politically close to Saudi Arabia, which shares his "Wahhabi" ideology. During anti-Soviet war, Sayyaf's faction, with Hikmatyar, was a principal recipient of U.S. weaponry. Criticized the U.S.-led war against Saddam Hussein after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.	orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Paghman (west of Kabul)

Source: CRS.

Figure 1. Map of Afghanistan

Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS.

Figure 2. Map of Afghan Ethnicities



Source: 2003 National Geographic Society. http://www.afghan-network.net/maps/Afghanistan-Map.pdf. Adapted by Amber Wilhelm, CRS Graphics.

Notes: This map is intended to be illustrative of the approximate demographic distribution by region of Afghanistan. CRS has no way to confirm exact population distributions.

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